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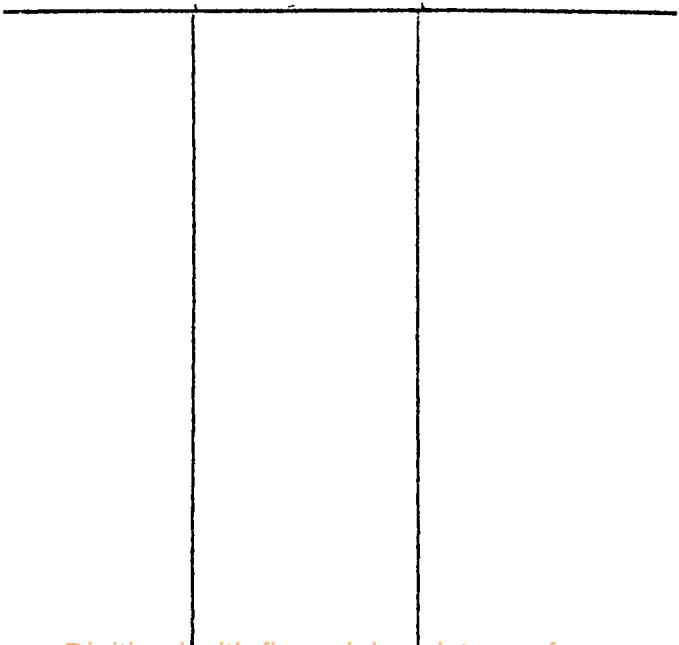

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THE HEPTAMERON

OF THE TALES OF

Margaret, Queen of Navarre

Newly Translated into English from the Authentic Text of M. le Roux de Lincy

WITH

AN ESSAY UPON THE HEPTAMERON

BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

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TALE VIII.

A certain Bornet, less loyal to his wife than she to him, desired to lie with his maid-servant, and made his enterprise known to a friend, who, hoping to share in the spoil, so aided and abetted him, that whilst the husband thought to lie with his servant he in truth lay with his wife. Unknown to the latter, he then caused his friend to participate in the pleasure which rightly belonged to himself alone, and thus made himself a cuckold without there being any guilt on the part of his wife.[1]

IN the county of Alletz[2] there lived a man named Bornet, who being married to an upright and virtuous wife, had great regard for her honour and reputation, as I believe is the case with all

[1] For a list of tales similar to this one, see *post*, Appendix A.

[2] Alletz, now Alais, a town of Lower Languedoc (department of the Gard), lies on the Gardon, at the foot of the Cevennes mountains. It was formerly a county, the title having been held by Charles, Duke of Angoulême, natural son of Charles IX.—M.

the husbands here present in respect to their own wives. But although he desired that she should be true to him, he was not willing that the same law should apply to both, for he fell in love with his maid-servant, from whom he had nothing to gain save the pleasure afforded by a diversity of viands.

Now he had a neighbour of the same condition as his own, named Sandras, a tabourer[3] and tailor by trade, and there was such friendship between them that, excepting Bornet's wife, they had all things in common. It thus happened that Bornet told his friend of the enterprise he had in hand against the maid-servant; and Sandras not only approved of it, but gave all the assistance he could to further its accomplishment, hoping that he himself might share in the spoil.

The maid-servant, however, was loth to consent, and finding herself hard pressed, she went to her mistress, told her of the matter, and begged leave to go home to her kinsfolk, since she could no longer endure to live in such torment. Her mistress, who had great love for her

[3] Tabourers are still to be found in some towns of Lower Languedoc and in most of those of Provence, where they perambulate the streets playing their instruments. They are in great request at all the country weddings and other festive gatherings, as their instruments supply the necessary accompaniment to the ancient Provençal dance, the *farandole*.—ED.

husband and had often suspected him, was well pleased to have him thus at a disadvantage, and to be able to show that she had doubted him justly. Accordingly, she said to the servant—

"Remain, my girl, but lead my husband on by degrees, and at last make an appointment to lie with him in my closet. Do not fail to tell me on what night he is to come, and see that no one knows anything about it."

The maid-servant did all that her mistress had commanded her, and her master in great content went to tell the good news to his friend. The latter then begged that, since he had been concerned in the business, he might have part in the result. This was promised him, and, when the appointed hour was come, the master went to lie, as he thought, with the maid-servant; but his wife, yielding up the authority of commanding for the pleasure of obeying, had put herself in the servant's place, and she received him, not in the manner of a wife, but after the fashion of a frightened maid. This she did so well that her husband suspected nothing.

I cannot tell you which of the two was the better pleased, he at the thought that he was deceiving his wife, or she at really deceiving her husband. When he had remained with her, not as long as he wished, but according to his

powers, which were those of a man who had long been married, he went out of doors, found his friend, who was much younger and lustier than himself, and told him gleefully that he had never met with better fortune. "You know what you promised me," said his friend to him.

"Go quickly then," replied the husband, "for she may get up, or my wife have need of her."

The friend went off and found the supposed maid-servant, who, thinking her husband had returned, denied him nothing that he asked of her, or rather took, for he durst not speak. He remained with her much longer than her husband had done, whereat she was greatly astonished, for she had not been wont to pass such nights. Nevertheless, she endured it all with patience, comforting herself with the thought of what she would say to him on the morrow, and of the ridicule that she would cast upon him.

Towards daybreak the man rose from beside her, and toying with her as he was going away, snatched from her finger the ring with which her husband had espoused her, and which the women of that part of the country guard with great superstition. She who keeps it till her death is held in high honour, while she who chances to lose it, is thought lightly of as a person who has given her faith to some other than her husband.

The wife, however, was very glad to have it taken, thinking it would be a sure proof of how she had deceived her husband.

When the friend returned, the husband asked him how he had fared. He replied that he was of the same opinion as himself, and that he would have remained longer had he not feared to be surprised by daybreak. Then they both went to the friend's house to take as long a rest as they could. In the morning, while they were dressing, the husband perceived the ring that his friend had on his finger, and saw that it was exactly like the one he had given to his wife at their marriage. He thereupon asked his friend from whom he had received the ring, and when he heard he had snatched it from the servant's finger, he was confounded and began to strike his head against the wall, saying—"Ah! good Lord! have I made myself a cuckold without my wife knowing anything about it?"

"Perhaps," said his friend in order to comfort him, "your wife gives her ring into the maid's keeping at night-time."

The husband made no reply, but took himself home, where he found his wife fairer, more gaily dressed, and merrier than usual, like one who rejoiced at having saved her maid's conscience, and tested her husband to the full, at no greater

cost than a night's sleep. Seeing her so cheerful, the husband said to himself—

"If she knew of my adventure she would not show me such a pleasant countenance."

Then, whilst speaking to her of various matters, he took her by the hand, and on noticing that she no longer wore the ring, which she had never been accustomed to remove from her finger, he was quite overcome.

"What have you done with your ring?" he asked her in a trembling voice.

She, well pleased that he gave her an opportunity to say what she desired, replied—

"O wickedest of men! From whom do you imagine you took it? You thought it was from my maid-servant, for love of whom you expended more than twice as much of your substance as you ever did for me. The first time you came to bed I thought you as much in love as it was possible to be; but after you had gone out and were come back again, you seemed to be a very devil. Wretch! think how blind you must have been to bestow such praises on my person and lustiness, which you have long enjoyed without holding them in any great esteem. 'Twas, therefore, not the maid-servant's beauty that made the pleasure so delightful to you, but the grievous sin of lust which so consumes your heart and so

clouds your reason that in the frenzy of your love for the servant you would, I believe, have taken a she-goat in a nightcap for a comely girl! Now, husband, it is time to amend your life, and, knowing me to be your wife, and an honest woman, to be as content with me as you were when you took me for a pitiful strumpet. What I did was to turn you from your evil ways, so that in your old age we might live together in true love and repose of conscience. If you purpose to continue your past life, I had rather be severed from you than daily see before my eyes the ruin of your soul, body, and estate. But if you will acknowledge the evil of your ways, and resolve to live in fear of God and obedience to His commandments, I will forget all your past sins, as I trust God will forget my ingratitude in not loving Him as I ought to do."

If ever man was reduced to despair it was this unhappy husband. Not only had he abandoned this sensible, fair, and chaste wife for a woman who did not love him, but, worse than this, he had without her knowledge made her a strumpet by causing another man to participate in the pleasure which should have been for himself alone; and thus he had made himself horns of everlasting derision.

However, seeing his wife in such wrath by

reason of the love he had borne his maid-servant, he took care not to tell her of the evil trick that he had played her; and entreating her forgiveness, with promises of full amendment of his former evil life, he gave her back the ring which he had recovered from his friend. He entreated the latter not to reveal his shame; but, as what is whispered in the ear is always proclaimed from the housetop, the truth, after a time, became known, and men called him cuckold without imputing any shame to his wife.

"It seems to me, ladies, that if all those who have committed like offences against their wives were to be punished in the same way, Hircan and Saffredent would have great cause for fear."

"Why, Longarine," said Saffredent, "are none in the company married save Hircan and I?"

"Yes, indeed there are others," she replied, "but none who would play a similar trick."

"Whence did you learn," asked Saffredent, "that we ever solicited our wives' maid-servants?"

"If the ladies who are in question," said Longarine, "were willing to speak the truth, we should certainly hear of maid-servants dismissed without notice."

"Truly," said Geburon, "you are a most worthy lady! You promised to make the company laugh, and yet are angering these two poor gentlemen."

"'Tis all one," said Longarine: "so long as they

do not draw their swords, their anger will only serve to increase our laughter."

"A pretty business indeed!" said Hircan. "Why, if our wives chose to believe this lady, she would embroil the seemliest household in the company."

"I am well aware before whom I speak," said Longarine. "Your wives are so sensible and bear you so much love, that if you were to give them horns as big as those of a deer, they would nevertheless try to persuade themselves and every one else that they were chaplets of roses."

At this the company, and even those concerned, laughed so heartily that their talk came to an end. However, Dagoucin, who had not yet uttered a word, could not help saying—

"Men are very unreasonable when, having enough to content themselves with at home, they go in search of something else. I have often seen people who, not content with sufficiency, have aimed at bettering themselves, and have fallen into a worse position than they were in before. Such persons receive no pity, for fickleness is always blamed."

"But what say you to those who have not found their other half?" asked Simontault. "Do you call it fickleness to seek it wherever it may be found?"

"Since it is impossible," said Dagoucin, "for a man to know the whereabouts of that other half with whom there would be such perfect union that one would not differ from the other, he should remain steadfast wherever love has attached him. And what-

soever may happen, he should change neither in heart nor in desire. If she whom you love be the image of yourself, and there be but one will between you, it is yourself you love, and not her."

"Dagoucin," said Hircan, "you are falling into error. You speak as though we should love women without being loved in return."

"Hircan," replied Dagoucin, "I hold that if our love be based on the beauty, grace, love, and favour of a woman, and our purpose be pleasure, honour, or profit, such love cannot long endure; for when the foundation on which it rests is gone, the love itself departs from us. But I am firmly of opinion that he who loves with no other end or desire than to love well, will sooner yield up his soul in death than suffer his great love to leave his heart."

"In faith," said Simontault, "I do not believe that you have ever been in love. If you had felt the flame like other men, you would not now be picturing to us Plato's *Republic*, which may be described in writing but not be put into practice."

"Nay, I have been in love," said Dagoucin, "and am so still, and shall continue so as long as I live. But I am in such fear lest the manifestation of this love should impair its perfection, that I shrink from declaring it even to her from whom I would fain have the like affection. I dare not even think of it lest my eyes should reveal it, for the more I keep my flame secret and hidden, the more does my pleasure increase at knowing that my love is perfect."

"For all that," said Geburon, "I believe that you would willingly have love in return."

"I do not deny it," said Dagoucin, "but even were I beloved as much as I love, my love would not be increased any more than it could be lessened, were it not returned with equal warmth."

Upon this Parlamente, who suspected this fantasy of Dagoucin's, said—

"Take care, Dagoucin; I have known others besides you who preferred to die rather than speak."

"Such persons, madam," said Dagoucin, "I deem very happy."

"Doubtless," said Saffredent, "and worthy of a place among the innocents of whom the Church sings:

'Non loquendo sed moriendo confessi sunt.'[4]

I have heard much of such timid lovers, but I have never yet seen one die. And since I myself have escaped death after all the troubles I have borne, I do not think that any one can die of love."

"Ah, Saffredent!" said Dagoucin, "how do you expect to be loved since those who are of your opinion never die? Yet have I known a goodly number who have died of no other ailment than perfect love."

"Since you know such stories," said Longarine, "I give you my vote to tell us a pleasant one, which shall be the ninth of to-day."

[4] From the ritual for the Feast of the Holy Innocents.—M.

"To the end," said Dagoucin, "that signs and miracles may lead you to put faith in what I have said, I will relate to you something which happened less than three years ago."

S. Freudenberg, inv. De Longueil. Gr. du Roi Scul.

TALE IX.

The perfect love borne by a gentleman to a damsel, being too deeply concealed and disregarded, brought about his death, to the great regret of his sweetheart.

BETWEEN Dauphiné and Provence there lived a gentleman who was far richer in virtue, comeliness, and honour than in other possessions, and who was greatly in love with a certain damsel. I will not mention her name, out of consideration for her kinsfolk, who are of good and illustrious descent; but you may rest assured that my story is a true one. As he was not of such noble birth as herself, he durst not reveal his affection, for the love he bore her was so great and perfect that he would rather have died than have desired aught to her dishonour. Seeing that he was so

greatly beneath her, he had no hope of marrying her; in his love, therefore, his only purpose was to love her with all his strength and as perfectly as he was able. This he did for so long a time that at last she had some knowledge of it; and, seeing that the love he bore her was so full of virtue and of good intent, she felt honoured by it, and showed him in turn so much favour that he, who sought nothing better than this, was well contented.

But malice, which is the enemy of all peace, could not suffer this honourable and happy life to last, and certain persons spoke to the maiden's mother of their amazement at this gentleman being thought so much of in her house. They said that they suspected him of coming there more on account of her daughter than of aught else, adding that he had often been seen in converse with her. The mother, who doubted the gentleman's honour as little as that of any of her own children, was much distressed on hearing that his presence was taken in bad part, and, dreading lest malicious tongues should cause a scandal, she entreated that he would not for some time frequent her house as he had been wont to do. He found this hard to bear, for he knew that his honourable conversation with her daughter did not deserve such estrangement. Nevertheless, in order to

silence evil gossip, he withdrew until the rumours had ceased; then he returned as before, his absence having in no wise lessened his love.

One day, however, whilst he was in the house, he heard some talk of marrying the damsel to a gentleman who did not seem to him to be so very rich that he should be entitled to take his mistress from him. So he began to pluck up courage, and engaged his friends to speak for him, believing that, if the choice were left to the damsel, she would prefer him to his rival. Nevertheless, the mother and kinsfolk chose the other suitor, because he was much richer; whereupon the poor gentleman, knowing his sweetheart to be as little pleased as himself, gave way to such sorrow, that by degrees, and without any other distemper, he became greatly changed, seeming as though he had covered the comeliness of his face with the mask of that death, to which hour by hour he was joyously hastening.

Meanwhile, he could not refrain from going as often as was possible to converse with her whom he so greatly loved. But at last, when strength failed him, he was constrained to keep his bed; yet he would not have his sweetheart know of this, lest he should cast part of his grief on her. And giving himself up to despair and sadness, he was no longer able to eat, drink, sleep, or rest,

so that it became impossible to recognise him by reason of his leanness and strangely altered features.

Some one brought the news of this to his sweetheart's mother, who was a lady full of charity, and who had, moreover, such a liking for the gentleman, that if all the kinsfolk had been of the same opinion as herself and her daughter, his merits would have been preferred to the possessions of the other. But the kinsfolk on the father's side would not hear of it. However, the lady went with her daughter to see the unhappy gentleman, and found him more dead than alive. Perceiving that the end of his life was at hand, he had that morning confessed and received the Holy Sacrament, thinking to die without seeing anybody more. But although he was at death's door, when he saw her who for him was the resurrection and the life come in, he felt so strengthened that he started up in bed.

"What motive," said he to the lady, "has inclined you to come and see one who already has a foot in the grave, and of whose death you are yourself the cause?"

"How is it possible," said the lady, "that the death of one whom we like so well can be brought about by our fault? Tell me, I pray, why you speak in this manner?"

"Madam," he replied, "I concealed my love for your daughter as long as I was able; and my kinsfolk, in speaking of a marriage between myself and her, made known more than I desired, since I have thereby had the misfortune to lose all hope; not, indeed, in regard to my own pleasure, but because I know that she will never have such fair treatment and so much love from any other as she would have had from me. Her loss of the best and most loving friend she has in the world causes me more affliction than the loss of my own life, which I desired to preserve for her sake only. But since it cannot in any wise be of service to her, the loss of it is to me great gain."

Hearing these words, the lady and her daughter sought to comfort him.

"Take courage, my friend, said the mother. "I pledge you my word that, if God gives you back your health, my daughter shall have no other husband but you. See, she is here present, and I charge her to promise you the same."

The daughter, weeping, strove to assure him of what her mother promised. He well knew, however, that even if his health were restored he would still lose his sweetheart, and that these fair words were only uttered in order somewhat

to revive him. Accordingly, he told them that had they spoken to him thus three months before, he would have been the lustiest and happiest gentleman in France; but that their aid came so late, it could bring him neither belief nor hope. Then, seeing that they strove to make him believe them, he said—

"Well, since, on account of my feeble state, you promise me a blessing which, even though you would yourselves have it so, can never be mine, I will entreat of you a much smaller one, for which, however, I was never yet bold enough to ask."

They immediately vowed that they would grant it, and bade him ask boldly.

"I entreat you," he said, "to place in my arms her whom you promise me for my wife, and to bid her embrace and kiss me."

The daughter, who was unaccustomed to such familiarity, sought to make some difficulty, but her mother straightly commanded her, seeing that the gentleman no longer had the feelings or vigour of a living man. Being thus commanded, the girl went up to the poor sufferer's bedside, saying—

"I pray you, sweetheart, be of good cheer."

Then, as well as he could, the dying man stretched forth his arms, wherein flesh and blood

alike were lacking, and with all the strength remaining in his bones embraced her who was the cause of his death. And kissing her with his pale cold lips, he held her thus as long as he was able. Then he said to her—

"The love I have borne you has been so great and honourable, that, excepting in marriage, I have never desired of you any other favour than the one you are granting me now, for lack of which and with which I shall cheerfully yield up my spirit to God. He is perfect love and charity. He knows the greatness of my love and the purity of my desire, and I beseech Him, while I hold my desire within my arms, to receive my spirit into His own."

With these words he again took her in his arms, and with such exceeding ardour that his enfeebled heart, unable to endure the effort, was deprived of all its faculties and life; for joy caused it so to swell that the soul was severed from its abode and took flight to its Creator.

And even when the poor body had lain a long time without life, and was thus unable to retain its hold, the love which the damsel had always concealed was made manifest in such a fashion that her mother and the dead man's servants had much ado to separate her from her lover. However, the girl, who, though living, was in a worse

condition than if she had been dead, was by force removed at last out of the gentleman's arms. To him they gave honourable burial; and the crowning point of the ceremony was the weeping and lamentation of the unhappy damsel, who having concealed her love during his lifetime, made it all the more manifest after his death, as though she wished to atone for the wrong that she had done him. And I have heard that although she was given a husband to comfort her, she has never since had joy in her heart.[1]

"What think you of that, gentlemen, you who would not believe what I said? Is not this example sufficient to make you confess that perfect love, when

[1] By an expression made use of by Dagoucin (see *ante*, p. 12), Queen Margaret gives us to understand that the incidents here related occurred three years prior to the writing of the story. It may be pointed out, however, that there is considerable analogy between the conclusion of this tale and the death of Geffroy Rudel de Blaye, one of the earliest troubadours whose name has been handed down to us. Geffroy, who lived at the close of the twelfth century, became so madly enamoured of the charms of the Countess of Tripoli, after merely hearing an account of her moral and physical perfections, that, although in failing health, he embarked for Africa to see her. On reaching the port of Tripoli, he no longer had sufficient strength to leave the vessel, whereupon the Countess, touched by his love, visited him on board, taking his hand and giving him a kindly greeting. Geffroy could scarcely say a few words of thanks; his emotion was so acute that he died upon the spot. See J. de Nostredame's *Vies des plus Célèbres et Anciens Poëtes Provençaux* (Lyons, 1575, p. 25); Raynouard's *Choix des Poésies des Troubadours* (vol. v. p. 165); and also Raynouard's *Histoire Littéraire de la France* (vol. xiv. p. 559).—L.

concealed and disregarded, may bring folks to the grave? There is not one among you but knows the kinsfolk on the one and the other side,[2] and so you cannot doubt the story, although nobody would be disposed to believe it unless he had some experience in the matter."

When the ladies heard this they all had tears in their eyes, but Hircan said to them—

"He was the greatest fool I ever heard of. By your faith, now, I ask you, is it reasonable that we should die for women who are made only for us, or that we should be afraid to ask them for what God has commanded them to give us? I do not speak for myself nor for any who are married. I myself have all that I want or more; but I say it for such men as are in need. To my thinking, they must be fools to fear those whom they should rather make afraid. Do you not perceive how greatly this poor damsel regretted her folly? Since she embraced the gentleman's dead body—an action repugnant to human nature—she would not have refused him while he was alive had he then trusted as much to

[2] This certainly points to the conclusion that the tale is founded upon fact, and not, as M. Leroux de Lincy suggests, borrowed from the story of Geffroy Rudel de Blaye. It will have been observed (*ante*, p. 13) that the Queen of Navarre curiously enough lays the scene of her narrative between Provence and Dauphiné. These two provinces bordered upon one another, excepting upon one point where they were separated by the so-called Comtat Venaissin or Papal state of Avignon. Here, therefore, the incidents of the story, if authentic, would probably have occurred. The story may be compared with Tale L. (*post*, vol. iv.).—ED.

boldness as he trusted to pity when he lay upon his death-bed."

"Nevertheless," said Oisille, "the gentleman most plainly showed that he bore her an honourable love, and for this he will ever be worthy of all praise. Chastity in a lover's heart is something divine rather than human."

"Madam," said Saffredent, "in support of Hircan's opinion, which is also mine, I pray you believe that Fortune favours the bold, and that there is no man loved by a lady but may at last, in whole or in part, obtain from her what he desires, provided he seek it with wisdom and passion. But ignorance and foolish fear cause men to lose many a good chance; and then they impute their loss to their mistress's virtue, which they have never verified with so much as the tip of the finger. A fortress was never well assailed but it was taken."

"Nay," said Parlamente, "I am amazed that you two should dare to talk in this way. Those whom you have loved owe you but little thanks, or else your courting has been carried on in such evil places that you deem all women to be alike."

"For myself, madam," said Saffredent, "I have been so unfortunate that I am unable to boast; but I impute my bad luck less to the virtue of the ladies than to my own fault, in not conducting my enterprises with sufficient prudence and sagacity. In support of my opinion I will cite no other

authority than the old woman in the *Romance of the Rose*, who says—

> 'Of all, fair sirs, it truly may be said,
> Woman for man and man for woman's made.'[3]

Accordingly I shall always believe that if love once enters a woman's heart, her lover will have fair fortune, provided he be not a simpleton."

"Well," said Parlamente, "if I were to name to you a very loving woman who was greatly sought after, beset and importuned, and who, like a virtuous lady, proved victorious over her heart, flesh, love and lover, would you believe this true thing possible?"

"Yes," said he, "I would."

"Then," said Parlamente, "you must all be hard of belief if you do not believe this story."

"Madam," said Dagoucin, "since I have given an example to show how the love of a virtuous gentleman lasted even until death, I pray you, if you know any such story to the honour of a lady, to tell it to us, and so end this day. And be not afraid to speak at length, for there is yet time to relate many a pleasant matter."

"Then, since I am to wind up the day," said Parlamente, "I will make no long preamble, for my story is so beautiful and true that I long to have you know it as well as I do myself. Although I was not an actual witness of the events, they were told to me by one of my best and dearest friends in praise of

[3] From John de Mehun's continuation of the poem.—M.

the man whom of all the world he had loved the most. But he charged me, should I ever chance to relate them, to change the names of the persons. Apart, therefore, from the names of persons and places the story is wholly true."

TALE X.

Florida, after virtuously resisting Amadour, who had assailed her honour almost to the last extremity, repaired, upon her husband's death, to the convent of Jesus, and there took the veil.[1]

IN the county of Aranda,[2] in Aragon, there lived a lady who, while still very young, was left a

[1] This tale appears to be a combination of fact and fiction. Although Queen Margaret states that she has changed the names of the persons, and also of the places where the incidents happened, several historical events are certainly brought into the narrative, the scene of which is laid in Spain during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. M. Le Roux de Lincy is of opinion, however, that Margaret really refers to some affair at the Court of Charles VIII. or Louis XII., and he remarks that there is great similarity between the position of the Countess of Aranda, left a widow at an early age with a son and a daughter, and that of Louise of Savoy with her two children. M. Lacroix and M. Dillaye believe the hero and heroine to be Admiral de Bonnivet and Margaret. It has often been suspected that the latter regarded her brother's favourite with affection until after the attempt related in Tale IV.—ED.

[2] Aranda, in the valley of the Duero, between Burgos and

widow, with a son and a daughter, by the Count of Aranda, the name of the daughter being Florida. This lady strove to bring up her children in all the virtues and qualities which beseem lords and gentlemen, so that her house was reputed to be one of the most honourable in all the Spains. She often went to Toledo, where the King of Spain dwelt, and when she came to Saragossa, which was not far from her house, she would remain a long while with the Queen and the Court, by whom she was held in as high esteem as any lady could be.

Going one day, according to her custom, to visit the King, then at his castle of La Jasserye,[3] at Saragossa, this lady passed through a village belonging to the Viceroy of Catalonia,[4] who, by

Madrid, is one of the most ancient towns in Spain, but of miserable aspect, although a large trade is carried on there in cheap red wines. Ferdinand and Isabella resided for some time at Aranda.—ED.

[3] This castle is called La Jafferie in Boaistuau's edition of 1558, and several learned commentators have speculated as to which is the correct spelling. Not one of them seems to have been aware that in the immediate vicinity of Saragossa there still stands an old castle called El Jaferia or Aljaferia, which, after being the residence of the Moorish sovereigns, became that of the Spanish kings of Aragon. It has of modern times been transformed into barracks.—ED.

[4] Henry of Aragon, Duke of Segorbe and Count of Ribagorce, was Viceroy of Catalonia at this period. He was called the Infante of Fortune, on account of his father having died before his birth in 1445.—B. J.

reason of the great wars between the kings of France and Spain, had not been wont to stir from the frontier at Perpignan. But for the time being there was peace, so that the Viceroy and all his captains had come to do homage to the King. The Viceroy, learning that the Countess of Aranda was passing through his domain, went to meet her, not only for the sake of the ancient friendship he bore her, but in order to do her honour as a kinswoman of the King's.

Now he had in his train many honourable gentlemen, who, in the long waging of war, had gained such great honour and renown that all who saw them and consorted with them deemed themselves fortunate. Among others there was one named Amadour, who, although but eighteen or nineteen years old, was possessed of such well-assured grace and of such excellent understanding that he would have been chosen from a thousand to hold a public office. It is true that this excellence of understanding was accompanied by such rare and winsome beauty that none could look at him without pleasure. And if his comeliness was of the choicest, it was so hard pressed by his speech that one knew not whether to give the greatest honour to his grace, his beauty, or the excellence of his conversation.

What caused him, however, to be still more highly esteemed was his great daring, which was no whit diminished by his youth. He had already shown in many places what he could do, so that not only the Spains, but France and Italy also made great account of his merits. For in all the wars in which he had taken part he had never spared himself, and when his country was at peace he would go in quest of wars in foreign lands, where he was loved and honoured by both friend and foe.

This gentleman, for the love he bore his commander, had come to the domain where the Countess of Aranda had arrived, and remarking the beauty and grace of her daughter Florida, who was then only twelve years old, he thought to himself that she was the fairest maiden he had ever seen, and that if he could win her favour it would give him greater satisfaction than all the wealth and pleasure he might obtain from another. After looking at her for a long time he resolved to love her, although his reason told him that what he desired was impossible by reason of her lineage as well as of her age, which was such that she could not yet understand any amorous discourse. In spite of this, he fortified himself with hope, and reflected that time and patience might bring his efforts to a

happy issue. And from that moment the kindly love, which of itself alone had entered Amadour's heart, assured him of all favour and the means of attaining his end.

To overcome the greatest difficulty before him, which consisted in the remoteness of his own home and the few opportunities he would have of seeing Florida again, he resolved to get married. This was contrary to what he had determined whilst with the ladies of Barcelona and Perpignan, in which places he was in such favour that little or nothing was refused him; and, indeed, by reason of the wars, he had dwelt so long on the frontiers that, although he was born near Toledo, he seemed rather a Catalan than a Castilian. He came of a rich and honourable house, but being a younger son, he was without patrimony; and thus it was that Love and Fortune, seeing him neglected by his kin, determined to make him their masterpiece, endowing him with such qualities as might obtain what the laws of the land had refused him. He was of much experience in the art of war, and was so beloved by all lords and princes that he refused their favours more frequently than he had occasion to seek them.

The Countess, of whom I have spoken, arrived then at Saragossa and was well received by the King and all his Court. The Governor of Cata-

lonia often came to visit her, and Amadour failed not to accompany him that he might have the pleasure of merely seeing Florida, for he had no opportunity of speaking with her. In order to establish himself in this goodly company he paid his addresses to the daughter of an old knight, his neighbour. This maiden was named Avanturada, and was so intimate with Florida that she knew all the secrets of her heart. Amadour, as much for the worth which he found in Avanturada as for the three thousand ducats a year which formed her dowry, determined to address her as a suitor, and she willingly gave ear to him. But as he was poor and her father was rich, she feared that the latter would never consent to the marriage except at the instance of the Countess of Aranda. She therefore had recourse to the lady Florida and said to her—

"You have seen, madam, that Castilian gentleman who often talks to me. I believe that all his aim is to have me in marriage. You know, however, what kind of father I have; he will never consent to the match unless he be earnestly entreated by the Countess and you."

Florida, who loved the damsel as herself, assured her that she would lay the matter to heart as though it were for her own benefit; and Avanturada then ventured so far as to present

Amadour to her. He was like to swoon for joy on kissing Florida's hand, and although he was accounted the readiest speaker in Spain, yet in her presence he became dumb. At this she was greatly surprised, for, although she was only twelve years old, she had already often heard it said that there was no man in Spain who could speak better or with more grace. So, finding that he said nothing to her, she herself spoke.

"Señor Amadour," she began, "the renown you enjoy throughout all the Spains has made you known to everybody here, and all are desirous of affording you pleasure. If therefore I can in any way do this, you may dispose of me."

Amadour was in such rapture at sight of the lady's beauty that he could scarcely utter his thanks. However, although Florida was astonished to find that he made no further reply, she imputed it rather to some whim than to the power of love; and so she withdrew, without saying anything more.

Amadour, who perceived the qualities which even in earliest youth were beginning to show themselves in Florida, now said to her whom he desired to marry—

"Do not be surprised if I lost the power of utterance in presence of the lady Florida. I was so astonished at finding such qualities and such

sensible speech in one so very young that I knew not what to say to her. But I pray you, Avanturada, you who know her secrets, tell me if she does not of necessity possess the hearts of all the gentlemen of the Court. Any who know her and do not love her must be stones or brutes."

Avanturada, who already loved Amadour more than any other man in the world, could conceal nothing from him, but told him that Florida was loved by every one. However, by reason of the custom of the country, few spoke to her, and only two had as yet made any show of love towards her. These were two princes of Spain, and they desired to marry her, one being the son of the Infante of Fortune [5] and the other the young Duke of Cardona.[6]

"I pray you," said Amadour, "tell me which of them you think she loves the most."

[5] M. Lacroix asserts that the Infante of Fortune left no son by his wife, Guyomare de Castro y Norogna; whereas M. Le Roux de Lincy contends that he had a son—Alfonso of Aragon—who in 1506 was proposed as a husband for Crazy Jane. Alfonso would therefore probably be the prince referred to by Margaret.—ED.

[6] Cardona, a fortified town on the river Cardoner, at a few miles from Barcelona, was a county in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was raised by them to the rank of a duchy in favour of Ramon Folch I. To-day it has between two and three thousand inhabitants, and is chiefly noted for its strongly built castillo. The young Duke spoken of by Queen Margaret would be Ramon Folch's son, who was also named Ramon.—B. J. and ED.

"She is so discreet," said Avanturada, "that on no account would she confess to having any wish but her mother's. Nevertheless, as far as can be judged, she likes the son of the Infante of Fortune far more than she likes the young Duke of Cardona. But her mother would rather have her at Cardona, for then she would not be so far away. I hold you for a man of good understanding, and, if you are so minded, you may judge of her choice this very day, for the son of the Infante of Fortune, who is one of the handsomest and most accomplished princes in Christendom, is being brought up at this Court. If we damsels could decide the marriage by our opinions, he would be sure of having the Lady Florida, for they would make the comeliest couple in all Spain. You must know that, although they are both young, she being but twelve and he but fifteen, it is now three years since their love for each other first began; and if you would secure her favour, I advise you to become his friend and follower."

Amadour was well pleased to find that Florida loved something, hoping that in time he might gain the place not of husband but of lover. He had no fear in regard to her virtue, but was rather afraid lest she should be insensible to love. After this conversation he began to con-

sort with the son of the Infante of Fortune, and readily gained his favour, being well skilled in all the pastimes that the young Prince was fond of, especially in the handling of horses, in the practice of all kinds of weapons, and indeed in every diversion and pastime befitting a young man.

However, war broke out again in Languedoc, and it was necessary that Amadour should return thither with the Governor. This he did, but not without great regret, since he could in no wise contrive to return to where he might see Florida. Accordingly, when he was setting forth, he spoke to a brother of his, who was majordomo to the Queen of Spain, and told him of the good match he had found in the Countess of Aranda's house, in the person of Avanturada; entreating him, in his absence, to do all that he could to bring about the marriage, by employing his credit with the King, the Queen, and all his friends. The majordomo, who was attached to his brother, not only by reason of their kinship, but on account of Amadour's excellent qualities, promised to do his best. This he did in such wise that the avaricious old father forgot his own nature to ponder over the qualities of Amadour, as pictured to him by the Countess of Aranda, and especially by the fair Florida, as well as by the young Count of Aranda, who was now beginning to grow up,

and to esteem people of merit. When the marriage had been agreed upon by the kinsfolk, the Queen's majordomo sent for his brother, there being at that time a truce between the two kings.[7]

Meanwhile, the King of Spain withdrew to Madrid to avoid the bad air which prevailed in divers places, and, by the advice of his Council, as well as at the request of the Countess of Aranda, he consented to the marriage of the young Count with the heiress Duchess of Medina Celi.[8] He did this no less for their contentment and the union of the two houses than for the affection he bore the Countess of Aranda; and he caused the marriage to be celebrated at the castle of Madrid.[9]

Amadour was present at this wedding, and

[7] There had been a truce in 1497, but Queen Margaret probably alludes to that of four months' duration towards the close of 1503. —B. J.

[8] Felix-Maria, widow of the Duke of Feria, and elder sister of Luis Francisco de la Cerda, ninth of the name. She became heiress to the titles and estates of the house of Medina-Celi upon her brother's death. If, however, Queen Margaret is really describing some incident in her own life, she must refer to Louis XII.'s daughter, Claude, married in 1514 to Francis I.—D.

[9] The castle here referred to was the Moorish Alcazar, destroyed by fire in 1734. The previous statement that King Ferdinand withdrew to Madrid on account of the bad air prevailing in other places is borne out by the fact that the town enjoyed a most delightful climate prior to the destruction of the forests which surrounded it.—ED.

succeeded so well in furthering his own union, that he married Avanturada, whose affection for him was far greater than his was for her. But this marriage furnished him with a very convenient cloak, and gave him an excuse for resorting to the place where his spirit ever dwelt. After he was married he became very bold and familiar in the Countess of Aranda's household, so that he was no more distrusted than if he had been a woman. And although he was now only twenty-two years of age, he showed such good sense that the Countess of Aranda informed him of all her affairs, and bade her son consult with him and follow his counsel.

Having gained their esteem thus far, Amadour comported himself so prudently and calmly that even the lady he loved was not aware of his affection for her. By reason, however, of the love she bore his wife, to whom she was more attached than to any other woman, she concealed none of her thoughts from him, and was pleased to tell him of all her love for the son of the Infante of Fortune. Although Amadour's sole aim was to win her entirely for himself, he continually spoke to her of the Prince; indeed, he cared not what might be the subject of their converse, provided only that he could talk to her for a long time. However, he had not remained a

month in this society after his marriage when he was constrained to return to the war, and he was absent for more than two years without returning to see his wife, who continued to live in the place where she had been brought up.

Meanwhile Amadour often wrote to her, but his letters were for the most part messages to Florida, who on her side never failed to return them, and would with her own hand add some pleasant words to the letters which Avanturada wrote. It was on this account that the husband of the latter wrote to her very frequently; yet of all this Florida knew nothing except that she loved Amadour as if he had been her brother. Several times during the course of five years did Amadour return and go away again; yet so short was his stay that he did not see Florida for two months altogether. Nevertheless, in spite of distance and length of absence, his love continued to increase.

At last it happened that he made a journey to see his wife, and found the Countess far removed from the Court, for the King of Spain was gone into Andalusia,[10] taking with him the young Count of Aranda, who was already beginning to

[10] There had been a revolt at Granada in 1499, and in the following year the Moors rose in the Alpujarras, whereupon King Ferdinand marched against them in person.—L.

bear arms. Thus the Countess had withdrawn to a country-house belonging to her on the frontiers of Aragon and Navarre. She was well pleased on seeing Amadour, who had now been away for nearly three years. He was made welcome by all, and the Countess commanded that he should be treated like her own son. Whilst he was with her she informed him of all the affairs of her household, leaving most of them to his judgment. And so much credit did he win in her house that wherever he visited all doors were opened to him, and, indeed, people held his prudence in such high esteem that he was trusted in all things as though he had been an angel or a saint.

Florida, by reason of the love she bore his wife and himself, sought him out wherever he went. She had no suspicion of his purpose, and was unrestrained in her manners, for her heart was free from love, save that she felt great contentment whenever she was near Amadour. To more than this she gave not a thought.

Amadour, however, had a hard task to escape the observation of those who knew by experience how to distinguish a lover's looks from another man's; for when Florida, thinking no evil, came and spoke familiarly to him, the fire that was hidden in his heart so consumed him that he

could not keep the colour from rising to his face or sparks of flame from darting from his eyes. Thus, in order that none might be any the wiser, he began to pay court to a very beautiful lady named Paulina, a woman so famed for beauty in her day that few men who saw her escaped from her toils.

This Paulina had heard how Amadour had made love at Barcelona and Perpignan, insomuch that he had gained the affection of the highest and most beautiful ladies in the land, especially that of a certain Countess of Palamos, who was esteemed the first for beauty among all the ladies of Spain; and she told him that she greatly pitied him, since, after so much good fortune, he had married such an ugly wife. Amadour, who well understood by these words that she had a mind to supply his need, made her the fairest speeches he could devise, seeking to conceal the truth by persuading her of a falsehood. But she, being subtle and experienced in love, was not to be put off with mere words; and feeling sure that his heart was not to be satisfied with such love as she could give him, she suspected he wished to make her serve as a cloak, and so kept close watch upon his eyes. These, however, knew so well how to dissemble, that she had nothing to guide her but the barest suspicion.

Nevertheless, her observation sorely troubled Amadour; for Florida, who was ignorant of all these wiles, often spoke to him before Paulina in such a familiar fashion that he had to make wondrous efforts to compel his eyes to belie his heart. To avoid unpleasant consequences, he one day, while leaning against a window, spoke thus to Florida—

"I pray you, sweetheart, counsel me whether it is better for a man to speak or die?"

Florida forthwith replied—

"I shall always counsel my friends to speak and not to die. There are few words that cannot be mended, but life once lost can never be regained."

"Will you promise me, then," said Amadour, "that you will not be displeased by what I wish to tell you, nor yet alarmed at it, until you have heard me to the end?"

"Say what you will," she replied; "if you alarm me, none can reassure me."

"For two reasons," he then began, "I have hitherto been unwilling to tell you of the great affection that I feel for you. First, I wished to prove it to you by long service, and secondly, I feared that you might deem it presumption in me, who am but a simple gentleman, to address myself to one upon whom it is not fitting that

I should look. And even though I were of royal station like your own, your heart, in its loyalty, would suffer none save the son of the Infante of Fortune, who has won it, to speak to you of love. But just as in a great war necessity compels men to devastate their own possessions and to destroy their corn in the blade, that the enemy may derive no profit therefrom, so do I risk anticipating the fruit which I had hoped to gather in season, lest your enemies and mine profit by it to your detriment. Know, then, that from your earliest youth I have devoted myself to your service and have ever striven to win your favour. For this purpose alone I married her whom I thought you loved best, and, being acquainted with the love you bear to the son of the Infante of Fortune, I have striven to serve him and consort with him, as you yourself know. I have sought with all my power for everything that I thought could give you pleasure. You see that I have won the esteem of your mother, the Countess, and of your brother, the Count, and of all you love, so that I am regarded here, not as a dependant, but as one of the family. All my efforts for five years past have had no other end than that I might spend my whole life near you.

"Understand that I am not one of those who

would by these means seek to obtain from you any favour or pleasure otherwise than virtuous. I know that I cannot marry you, and even if I could, I would not do so in face of the love you bear him whom I would fain see your husband. And as for loving you with a vicious love like those who hope that long service will bring them a reward to the dishonour of a lady, that is far from my purpose. I would rather see you dead than know that you were less worthy of being loved, or that your virtue had diminished for the sake of any pleasure to me. For the end and reward of my service I ask but one thing, namely, that you will be so faithful a mistress to me, as never to take your favour from me, and that you will suffer me to continue as I now am, trusting in me more than in any other, and accepting from me the assurance that if for your honour's sake, or for aught concerning you, you ever have need of a gentleman's life, I will gladly place mine at your disposal. You may be sure also that whatever I may do that is honourable and virtuous, will be done solely for love of you. If for the sake of ladies less worthy than you I have ever done anything that has been considered of account, be sure that, for a mistress like yourself, my enterprise will so increase, that things I heretofore found impossible will become

very easy to me. If, however, you will not accept me as wholly yours, I am resolved to lay aside my arms and to renounce the valour which has failed to help me in my need. So I pray you grant me my just request, for your honour and conscience cannot refuse it."

The maiden, hearing these unwonted words, began to change colour and to cast down her eyes like a woman in alarm. However, being sensible and discreet, she replied—

"Since you already have what you ask of me, Amadour, why make me such à long harangue? I fear me lest beneath your honourable words there be some hidden guile to deceive my ignorance and youth, and I am sorely perplexed what to reply. Were I to refuse the honourable love you offer, I should do contrary to what I have hitherto done, for I have always trusted you more than any other man in the world. Neither my conscience nor my honour oppose your request, nor yet the love I bear the son of the Infante of Fortune, for that is founded on marriage, to which you do not aspire. I know of nothing that should hinder me from answering you according to your desire, if it be not a fear arising from the small need you have for talking to me in this wise; for if what you ask is already yours, why speak of it so ardently?"

Amadour, who was at no loss for an answer, then said to her—

"Madam, you speak very discreetly, and you honour me so greatly by the trust which you say you have in me, that if I were not satisfied with such good fortune I should be quite unworthy of it. But consider, madam, that he who would build an edifice to last for ever must be careful to have a sure and stable foundation. In the same way I, wishing to continue for ever in your service, must not only take care to have the means of remaining near to you, but also to prevent any one from knowing of the great affection that I bear you. Although it is honourable enough to be everywhere proclaimed, yet those who know nothing of lovers' hearts often judge contrary to the truth, and thence come reports as mischievous as though they were true. I have been prompted to say this, and led to declare my love to you, because Paulina, feeling in her heart that I cannot love her, holds me in suspicion and does nought but watch my face wherever I may be. Hence, when you come and speak to me so familiarly in her presence, I am in great fear lest I should make some sign on which she may ground her judgment, and should so fall into that which I am anxious to avoid. For this reason I am lead to entreat you not to come and

speak to me so suddenly before her or before others whom you know to be equally malicious, for I would rather die than have any living creature know the truth. Were I not so regardful of your honour, I should not have sought this converse with you, for I hold myself sufficiently happy in the love and trust you bear me, and I ask nothing more save that they may continue."

Florida, who could not have been better pleased, began to be sensible of an unwonted feeling in her heart. She saw how honourable were the reasons which he laid before her; and she told him that virtue and honour replied for her, and that she granted him his request. Amadour's joy at this no true lover can doubt.

Florida, however, gave more heed to his counsel than he desired, for she became timid not only in presence of Paulina but elsewhere, and ceased to seek him out as she had been accustomed to do. While they were thus separated she took Amadour's constant converse with Paulina in bad part, for, seeing that the latter was beautiful, she could not believe that Amadour did not love her. To beguile her sorrow she conversed continually with Avanturada, who was beginning to feel very jealous of her husband and Paulina, and often complained of them to

Florida, who comforted her as well as she could, being herself smitten with the same disease. Amadour soon perceived the change in Florida's demeanour, and forthwith thought that she was keeping aloof from him not merely by his own advice, but also on account of some bitter fancies of her own.

One day, when they were coming from vespers at a monastery, he spoke to her, and asked—

"What countenance is this you show me, madam?"

"That which I believe you desire," replied Florida.

Thereupon, suspecting the truth, and desiring to know whether he was right, he said to her—

"I have used my time so well, madam, that Paulina no longer has any suspicion of you."

"You could not do better," she replied, "both for yourself and for me. While giving pleasure to yourself you bring me honour."

Amadour gathered from this speech that she believed he took pleasure in conversing with Paulina, and so great was his despair that he could not refrain from saying angrily to her—

"In truth, madam, you begin betimes to torment your lover and pelt him with hard words. I do not think I ever had a more irksome task than to be obliged to hold converse with a lady

I do not love. But since you take what I have done to serve you in bad part, I will never speak to her again, happen what may. And that I may hide my wrath as I have hidden my joy, I will betake me to some place in the neighbourhood, and there wait till your caprice has passed away. I hope, however, I shall there receive tidings from my captain and be called back to the war, where I will remain long enough to show you that nothing but yourself has kept me here."

So saying, he forthwith departed without waiting for her reply.

Florida felt the greatest vexation and sorrow imaginable; and love, meeting with opposition, began to put forth its mighty strength. She perceived that she had been in the wrong, and wrote continually to Amadour entreating him to return, which he did after a few days, when his anger had abated.

I cannot undertake to tell you minutely all that they said to each other in order to destroy this jealousy. But at all events he won the victory, and she promised him that not only would she never believe he loved Paulina, but that she would ever be convinced he found it an intolerable martyrdom to speak either to Paulina or to any one else except to do herself a service.

When love had conquered this first suspicion,

and while the two lovers were beginning to take fresh pleasure in conversing together, news came that the King of Spain was sending all his army to Salces.[11] Amadour, accustomed ever to be the first in battle, failed not to seize this opportunity of winning renown; but in truth he set forth with unwonted regret, both on account of the pleasure he was losing and because he feared that he might find a change on his return. He knew that Florida, who was now fifteen or sixteen years old, was sought in marriage by many great princes and lords, and he reflected that if she were married during his absence he might have no further opportunity of seeing her, unless, indeed, the Countess of Aranda gave her his wife, Avanturada, as a companion. However, by skilful management with his friends, he obtained a promise from both mother and daughter that wherever Florida might go after her marriage thither should his wife, Avanturada, accompany

[11] Salces, a village about fifteen miles north of Perpignan, noted for its formidable fortress, still existing and commanding a pass through the Corbière Mountains, which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries separated France from Roussillon, then belonging to Spain. The French burnt the village and demolished the fort of Salces in 1496, but the latter was rebuilt by the Spaniards in the most massive style. The walls of the fort are 66 feet thick at the base and 54 feet thick at the summit. When Queen Margaret returned from Spain in 1525 she reached France by the pass of Salces. (See vol. i. p. xlvi.).—ED.

her. Although it was proposed to marry Florida in Portugal, it was, nevertheless resolved that Avanturada should never leave her. With this assurance, yet not without unspeakable regret, Amadour went away and left his wife with the Countess.

When Florida found herself alone after his departure, she set about doing such good and virtuous works as she hoped might win her the reputation that belongs to the most perfect women, and might prove her to be worthy of such a lover as Amadour. He having arrived at Barcelona, was there welcomed by the ladies as of old; but they found a greater change in him than they believed it possible for marriage to effect in any man. He seemed to be vexed by the sight of things he had formerly desired; and even the Countess of Palamos, whom he had loved exceedingly, could not persuade him to visit her.

Amadour remained at Barcelona as short a time as possible, for he was impatient to reach Salces, where he alone was now awaited. When he arrived, there began between the two kings that great and cruel war which I do not purpose to describe.[12] Neither will I recount the noble

[12] In 1503 the French, under Marshals de Rieux and de Gié, again besieged Salces, which had a garrison of 1200 men. The

deeds that were done by Amadour, for then my story would take up an entire day; but you must know that he won renown far above all his comrades. The Duke of Najera [13] having arrived at Perpignan in command of two thousand men, requested Amadour to be his lieutenant, and so well did Amadour fulfil his duty with this band, that in every skirmish the only cry was "Najera!" [14]

Now it came to pass that the King of Tunis, who for a long time had been at war with the Spaniards, heard that the kings of France and Spain were warring with each other on the frontiers of Perpignan and Narbonne, and bethought himself that he could have no better opportunity of vexing the King of Spain. Accordingly, he sent a great number of light galleys and other vessels to plunder and destroy all such

latter opposed a vigorous defence during two months, and upon the arrival of the old Duke of Alba with an army of succour the siege had to be raised.—B. J.

[13] Pedro Manriquez de Lara, Count of Trevigno, created Duke of Najera by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1501.—B. J.

[14] The Duke's war-cry, repeated by his followers as a rallying signal in the *mêlée*. War-cries varied greatly. "Montjoie St. Denis" was that of the kings of France, and "Passavant le meilleur" (the best to the front) that of the Counts of Champagne. In other instances the war-cry consisted of a single word, "Bigorre" being that of the kings of Navarre, and "Flanders" that of the Princess of Beaujeu. When the war-cry was merely a name, as in the case of the Duke of Najera, it belonged to the head of the family.—D.

badly-guarded places as they could find on the coasts of Spain.[15] The people of Barcelona seeing a great fleet passing in front of their town, sent word of the matter to the Viceroy, who was at Salces, and he forthwith despatched the Duke of Najera to Palamos.[16] When the Moors saw that place so well guarded, they made a feint of passing on; but returning at midnight, they landed a large number of men, and the Duke of Najera, being surprised by the enemy, was taken prisoner.

Amadour, who was on the alert and heard the din, forthwith assembled as many of his men as possible, and defended himself so stoutly that the enemy, in spite of their numbers, were for a long time unable to prevail against him. But at last, hearing that the Duke of Najera was taken, and that the Turks had resolved to set fire to Palamos and burn him in the house which he was holding against them, he thought it better to yield than to cause the destruction of the brave men who were with him. He also hoped that by paying a ransom he might yet see Florida

[15] The above two sentences, deficient in the MS. followed by M. Le Roux de Lincy, have been borrowed from MS. No. 1520 (Bib. Nat.). It was in 1503 that a Moorish flotilla ravaged the coast of Catalonia.—ED.

[16] The village of Palamos, on the shores of the Mediterranean, south of Cape Bagur, and within fifteen miles from Gerona.—ED.

again. Accordingly, he gave himself up to a Turk named Dorlin, a governor of the King of Tunis, who brought him to his master. By the latter he was well received and still better guarded; for the King deemed that in him he held the Achilles of all the Spains.

Thus Amadour continued for two years in the service of the King of Tunis. The news of the captures having reached Spain, the kinsfolk of the Duke of Najera were in great sorrow; but those who held the country's honour dear deemed Amadour the greater loss. The rumour came to the house of the Countess of Aranda, where the hapless Avanturada at that time lay grievously sick. The Countess, who had great misgivings as to the affection which Amadour bore to her daughter, though she suffered it and concealed it for the sake of the merits she perceived in him, took Florida apart and told her the mournful tidings. Florida, who was well able to dissemble, replied that it was a great loss to the entire household, and that above all she pitied his poor wife, who was herself so ill. Nevertheless, seeing that her mother wept exceedingly, she shed a few tears to bear her company; for she feared that if she dissembled too far the feint might be discovered. From that time the Countess often spoke to her of Amadour, but

never could she surprise a look to guide her judgment.

I will pass over the pilgrimages, prayers, supplications, and fasts which Florida regularly performed to ensure the safety of Amadour. As soon as he had arrived at Tunis, he failed not to send tidings of himself to his friends, and by a trusty messenger he apprised Florida that he was in good health, and had hopes of seeing her again. This was the only consolation the poor lady had in her grief, and you may be sure that, since she was permitted to write, she did so with all diligence, so that Amadour had no lack of her letters to comfort him.

The Countess of Aranda was about this time commanded to repair to Saragossa, where the King had arrived; and here she found the young Duke of Cardona, who so pressed the King and Queen that they begged the Countess to give him their daughter in marriage.[17] The Countess consented, for she was unwilling to disobey them in anything, and moreover she considered that

[17] The Spanish historians state that in 1513 the King, to put an end to a quarrel between the Count of Aranda and the Count of Ribagorce, charged Father John of Estuniga, Provincial of the Order of St. Francis, to negotiate a reconciliation between them, based on the marriage of the eldest daughter of the Count of Aranda with the eldest son of the Count of Ribagorce. The latter refusing his consent, was banished from the kingdom.—D.

her daughter, being so young, could have no will of her own. When all was settled, she told Florida that she had chosen for her the match which seemed most suitable. Florida, knowing that when a thing is once done there is small room for counsel, replied that God was to be praised for all things; and, finding her mother look coldly upon her, she sought rather to obey her than to take pity on herself. It scarcely comforted her in her sorrows to learn that the son of the Infante of Fortune was sick even to death; but never, either in presence of her mother or of any one else, did she show any sign of grief. So strongly did she constrain herself, that her tears, driven perforce back into her heart, caused so great a loss of blood from the nose that her life was endangered; and, that she might be restored to health, she was given in marriage to one whom she would willingly have exchanged for death.

After the marriage Florida departed with her husband to the duchy of Cardona, taking with her Avanturada, whom she privately acquainted with her sorrow, both as regards her mother's harshness and her own regret at having lost the son of the Infante of Fortune; but she never spoke of her regret for Amadour except to console his wife.

This young lady then resolved to keep God and honour before her eyes. So well did she conceal her grief, that none of her friends perceived that her husband was displeasing to her.

In this way she spent a long time, living a life that was worse than death, as she failed not to inform her lover Amadour, who, knowing the virtue and greatness of her heart, as well as the love that she had borne to the son of the Infante of Fortune, thought it impossible that she could live long, and mourned for her as for one that was more than dead. This sorrow was an increase to his former grief, and forgetting his own distress in that which he knew his sweetheart was enduring, he would willingly have continued all his life the slave he was if Florida could thereby have had a husband after her own heart. He learnt from a friend whom he had gained at the Court of Tunis that the King, wishing to keep him if only he could make a good Turk of him, intended to give him his choice between impalement and the renunciation of his faith. Thereupon he so addressed himself to his master, the governor who had taken him prisoner, that he persuaded him to release him on parole. His master named, however, a much higher ransom than he thought could be raised

by a man of such little wealth, and then, without speaking to the King, he let him go.

When Amadour reached the Court of the King of Spain, he stayed there but a short time, and then, in order to seek his ransom among his friends, he repaired to Barcelona, whither the young Duke of Cardona, his mother, and Florida had gone on business. As soon as Avanturada heard that her husband was returned, she told the news to Florida, who rejoiced as though for love of her friend. Fearing, however, that her joy at seeing Amadour might make her change her countenance, and that those who did not know her might think wrongly of her, she remained at a window in order to see him coming from afar. As soon as she perceived him she went down by a dark staircase, so that none could see whether she changed colour, and embracing Amadour, led him to her room, and thence to her mother-in-law, who had never seen him. He had not been there for two days before he was loved as much as he had been in the household of the Countess of Aranda.

I leave you to imagine the conversation that he and Florida had together, and how she complained to him of the misfortunes that had come to her in his absence. After shedding many tears of sorrow, both for having been married

against her will and also for having lost one she loved so dearly without any hope of seeing him again, she resolved to take consolation from the love and trust she had towards Amadour. Though she durst not declare the truth, he suspected it, and lost neither time nor opportunity to show her how much he loved her.

Just when Florida was all but persuaded to receive him, not as a lover, but as a true and perfect friend, a misfortune came to pass, for the King summoned Amadour to him concerning some important matter.

His wife was so grieved on hearing these tidings that she swooned, and falling down a staircase on which she was standing, was so hurt that she never rose again. Florida having by this death lost all her consolation, mourned like one who felt herself bereft of friends and kin. But Amadour grieved still more; for on the one part he lost one of the best wives that ever lived, and on the other the means of ever seeing Florida again. This caused him such sorrow that he was near coming by a sudden death. The old Duchess of Cardona visited him incessantly, reciting the arguments of philosophers why he should endure his loss with patience. But all was of no avail; for if on the one hand his wife's death afflicted him, on the

other his love increased his martyrdom. Having no longer any excuse to stay when his wife was buried, and his master again summoned him, his despair was such that he was like to lose his reason.

Florida, who thinking to comfort him, was herself the cause of his greatest grief, spent a whole afternoon in the most gracious converse with him in order to lessen his sorrow, and assured him that she would find means to see him oftener than he thought. Then, as he was to depart on the following morning, and was so weak that he could scarcely stir from his bed, he prayed her to come and see him in the evening after every one else had left him. This she promised to do, not knowing that love in extremity is void of reason.

Amadour altogether despaired of ever again seeing her whom he had loved so long, and from whom he had received no other treatment than I have described. Racked by secret passion and by despair at losing all means of consorting with her, he resolved to play at double or quits, and either lose her altogether or else wholly win her, and so pay himself in an hour the reward which he thought he had deserved. Accordingly he had his bed curtained in such a manner that those who came into the room could not see him; and

he complained so much more than he had done previously that all the people of the house thought he had not twenty-four hours to live.

After every one else had visited him, Florida, at the request of her husband himself, came in the evening, hoping to comfort him by declaring her affection and by telling him that, so far as honour allowed, she was willing to love him. She sat down on a chair beside the head of his bed, and began her consolation by weeping with him. Amadour, seeing her filled with such sorrow, thought that in her distress he might the more readily achieve his purpose, and raised himself up in the bed. Florida, thinking that he was too weak to do this, sought to prevent him, but he threw himself on his knees before her saying, "Must I lose sight of you for ever?" Then he fell into her arms like one exhausted. The hapless Florida embraced him and supported him for a long time, doing all she could to comfort him. But what she offered him to cure his pain only increased it; and while feigning to be half dead, he, without saying a word, strove to obtain that which the honour of ladies forbids.

When Florida perceived his evil purpose, in which she could hardly believe after all his honourable conversation, she asked him what he sought to do. Amadour, fearing her reply, which

he knew could not be otherwise than chaste and virtuous, said nothing, but pursued his attempt with all the strength that he could muster. Florida, greatly astonished, suspected rather that he had lost his senses than that he was really bent upon her dishonour, and called out to a gentleman whom she knew to be in the room; whereupon Amadour in extreme despair flung himself back upon his bed so suddenly that the gentleman thought him dead.

Florida, who had risen from her chair, then said to the gentleman—

"Go quickly for some strong vinegar."

This the gentleman did, whereupon Florida said—

"What madness, Amadour, has mounted to your brain? What was it you thought and wished to do?"

Amadour, who had lost all reason in the vehemence of his love, replied—

"Does so long a service merit so cruel a reward?"

"And what of the honour of which you have so often preached to me?" said Florida.

"Ah! madam," said Amadour, "it would be impossible to hold your honour more dear than I have held it. Before you were married, I was able so to subdue my heart that you knew

nothing of my desires, but now that you are wedded and your honour may be shielded, do I wrong you in asking for what is mine? By the strength of my love I have won you. He who first possessed your heart had so little desire for your person that he deserved to lose both. He who now owns your person is not worthy to have your heart, and hence even your person does not properly belong to him. But for five or six years I have for your sake borne many pains and woes, which must show you that your body and heart belong to me alone. Think not to defend yourself by speaking of conscience, for when love constrains body and heart sin is never imputed. Those who are driven by frenzy so far as to slay themselves cannot sin, for passion leaves no room for reason; and if the passion of love be more intolerable than any other, and more blinding to the senses, what sin could you fasten upon one who yields to the conduct of such indomitable power? I am going away, and have no hope of ever seeing you again; but if before my departure I could have of you that assurance which the greatness of my love deserves, I should be strengthened sufficiently to endure in patience the sorrows of a long separation. If you will not grant me my request you will ere long learn that your harshness

has brought me to a miserable and a cruel death."[18]

Florida was not less grieved than astonished to hear these words from one whom she had never imagined capable of such discourse, and, weeping, she thus replied—

"Alas, Amadour, is this the honourable converse that we used to have together while I was young? Is this the honour or conscience which many a time you counselled me to value more than life? Have you forgotten both the worthy examples you set before me of virtuous ladies who withstood unholy love, and also your own contempt for erring women? I cannot believe you so changed, Amadour, that regard for God, your own conscience, and my honour is wholly dead within you. But if it indeed be as you say, I praise the divine goodness which has prevented the misfortune into which I was about to fall,

[18] The passage commencing "Those who are driven" and ending "a cruel death" is deficient in the earlier editions of the *Heptameron*, which give the following in place of it: "Do not doubt but what those who have felt the power of love will cast the blame on you who have so robbed me of my liberty and dazzled my senses with your divine graces, that not knowing what to do henceforth, I am constrained to go away without the hope of ever seeing you again; certain, however, that wherever I may be, you will still have part of my heart, which will ever remain yours, be I on land, on the sea, or in the hands of my most cruel enemies." The above is one of various instances of the liberty taken by Boaistuau and Gruget with Margaret's text.—ED.

and has revealed to me by your own words the heart of which I was so ignorant. Having lost the son of the Infante of Fortune, not only by my marriage, but also, as is known to me, by reason of his love for another, and finding myself wedded to a man whom, strive as I may, I cannot love, I resolved to set heart and affection entirely on loving you. This love I built upon that virtue which I had so often perceived in you, and to which by your own assistance I think I have attained — I mean the virtue of loving one's honour and conscience more than life. I came hither thinking to make this rock of virtue a sure foundation of love. But you have in a moment shown me, Amadour, that instead of a pure and cleanly rock, this foundation would have been one of shifting sand or filthy mire; and although a great part of the house in which I hoped always to dwell had already been raised, you have suddenly demolished it. Lay aside, therefore, any hope you had concerning me, and make up your mind not to seek me by look or word wherever I may be, or to hope that I shall ever be able or willing to change my resolve. It is with the deepest sorrow that I tell you this, though had I gone so far as to swear eternal love with you, I know that my heart could not have lived through this meeting. Even now I am so

confounded to find myself deceived, that I am sure my life will be either short or sad. With these words I bid you farewell, and for ever."

I will not try to describe to you the grief that Amadour felt on hearing this speech. It is impossible not only to describe it, but even to conceive it, except indeed to such as have experienced the like. Seeing that with this cruel conclusion she was about to leave him, he seized her by the arm, knowing full well that, if he did not remove her evil opinion of him, he would lose her for ever. Accordingly he dissembled his looks as well as he could, and said—

"During my whole life, madam, I have desired to love a woman of virtue, and having found so few of them, I was minded to put you to proof, and so discover whether you were as well worthy of esteem as of love. Now I know for certain that you are; and therefore I give praise to God, who has inclined my heart to the love of such great perfection. I entreat you to pardon my mad and foolhardy attempt, seeing that the issue of it has turned to your honour and to my great satisfaction."

Florida was beginning to learn through him the deceitfulness of men; and, just as she had formerly found it difficult to believe in evil where it existed, so did she now find it even more

difficult to believe in virtue where there was none.

"Would to God you spoke the truth," she said to him; "but I am not so ignorant as not to know by my experience in marriage that the blindness of strong passion led you to act as you did. Had God given me a loose rein I am sure that you would not have drawn bridle. Those who go in quest of virtue are wont to take a different road to yours. But enough; if I have been too hasty in crediting you with some goodness, it is time I learned the truth, by which I am now delivered out of your hands."

So saying, Florida left the room. As long as the night lasted she did nought but weep; for the change that had taken place caused her intense grief, and her heart had much ado to hold out against the sorrowing of love. Although, guided by reason, she had resolved to love no more, yet the heart, which cannot be subdued, would in no wise permit this. Thus she was unable to love him less than before, and knowing that love had been the cause of his offence, she made up her mind to satisfy love by continuing to love him with her whole heart, and to obey honour by never giving any sign of her affection either to him or to any one else.

In the morning Amadour departed in the

distress that I have described. Nevertheless his heart, which was so lofty that there was none like it in the world, suffered him not to despair, but prompted him to new devices for seeing Florida again and winning her favour. So as he proceeded to the King of Spain, who was then at Toledo, he took his way through the county of Aranda, where he arrived very late one evening, and found the Countess in great sadness on account of the absence of her daughter.

When she saw Amadour she kissed and embraced him as though he had been her own son, and this no less for the love she herself bore him as for that which she suspected he had for Florida. She asked minutely for news of her daughter, and he told her what he could, though not the entire truth. However, he confessed the love which existed between them, and which Florida had always concealed; and he begged the Countess to aid him in hearing often of Florida, and to take her as speedily as possible to Aranda.

At daybreak he went on his way, and when he had despatched his business with the King he left for the war. So sad was he and so changed in every way that ladies, captains, and acquaintances alike could scarcely recognise him.

He now wore nothing but black, and this of a heavier pile than was needful as mourning for his dead wife; but indeed her death served only as a cloak for the sorrow that was in his heart. Thus Amadour spent three or four years without returning to Court.

The Countess of Aranda hearing that Florida was changed and that it was pitiful to see her, sent for her, hoping that she would return home. The contrary, however, happened. When Florida learned that Amadour had told her mother of their love, and that she, although so discreet and virtuous, had approved of it, she was in extraordinary perplexity. On the one hand she perceived that if her mother, who had such great esteem for Amadour, were told the truth some mischief might befall the latter; and this even to save her life she would not have brought to pass, for she felt strong enough to punish his folly herself without calling on her kinsfolk for assistance. On the other hand she saw that, if she concealed the evil she knew of him, she would be constrained by her mother and all her friends to speak to him and show him favour, and this she feared would only strengthen his evil purpose. However, as he was a long way off, she kept her own counsel, and wrote to him whenever the Countess commanded her. Still her letters were

such that he could see they were written more out of obedience than goodwill; and the grief he felt in reading them was as great as his joy had been in reading the earlier ones.

At the end of two or three years, when he had performed so many noble deeds that all the paper in Spain could not contain the records of them,[19] he conceived a very skilful device, not indeed to win Florida's heart, which he looked upon as lost, but to gain the victory over his enemy, since such she had shown herself to be. He put aside all the promptings of reason and even the fear of death, and at the risk of his life resolved to act in the following way. He persuaded the chief Governor[20] to send him on an embassy to the King concerning some secret attempt against Leucate;[21] and he procured a command to take counsel with the Countess of Aranda about the matter before communicating it to the King.

[19] Margaret, perhaps, wrote "All the paper of Spain could not contain them," simply because Spanish paper was then of very small size. Paper-making had, however, been almost monopolised by Spain until the end of the thirteenth century, the cotton used in the manufacture being imported from the East.—M.

[20] The Viceroy of Catalonia.—D.

[21] Leucate, now a village, but said to have been a flourishing town in the fourteenth century, lies near the Mediterranean, at a few miles from Salces, and gives its name to a large salt-water lake. Formerly fortified, it was repeatedly besieged and burnt by the Spaniards; notably by the Duke of Alba in 1503, after he had relieved Salces.—ED.

Then he came post haste to the county of Aranda, where he knew Florida to be, and secretly sent a friend to inform the Countess of his coming, praying her to keep it secret, and to grant him audience at nightfall without the knowledge of any one.

The Countess, who was very pleased at his coming, spoke of it to Florida, and sent her to undress in her husband's room, that she might be ready when sent for after every one was gone to bed. Florida had not yet recovered from her first alarm, but she said nothing of it to her mother, and withdrew to an oratory in order to commend herself to Our Lord. While she was praying that her heart might be preserved from all evil affection, she remembered that Amadour had often praised her beauty, and that in spite of long illness it had not been impaired. Being, therefore, more willing to injure her beauty than suffer it to kindle an evil flame in the heart of an honourable gentleman, she took a stone which lay in the chapel and struck herself a grievous blow on the face so that her mouth, nose, and eyes were quite disfigured. Then, in order that no one might suspect it to be of her own doing, she let herself fall upon her face on leaving the chapel when summoned by the Countess, and cried out loudly. The Countess coming thither

found her in this pitiful state, and forthwith caused her face to be dressed and bandaged.

Then the Countess led her to her own apartment, and begged her to go to her room and entertain Amadour until she herself had got rid of her company. This Florida did, thinking that there were others with him.

But when she found herself alone with him, and the door closed upon her, she was as greatly troubled as he was pleased. He thought that, by love or violence, he would now have what he desired; so he spoke to her, and finding that she made the same reply as before, and that even to save her life she would not change her resolve, he was beside himself with despair.

"Before God, Florida," he said to her, "your scruples shall not rob me of the fruits of my labour. Since love, patience, and humble entreaty are of no avail, I will spare no strength of mine to gain the boon, upon which all its existence depends."

Florida saw that his eyes and countenance were altered exceedingly, so that his complexion, naturally the fairest in the world, was now as red as fire, and his look, usually so gentle and pleasant, had become as horrible and furious as though fierce flames were blazing in his heart and face. In his frenzy he seized her delicate,

weak hands in his own strong, powerful ones; and she, finding herself in such bondage that she could neither defend herself nor fly, thought that her only chance was to try whether he had not retained some traces of his former love, for the sake of which he might forego his cruelty. She therefore said to him—

"If you now look upon me, Amadour, in the light of an enemy, I entreat you, by that pure love which I once thought was in your heart, to hearken to me before you put me to torture."

Seeing that he became attentive, she continued—

"Alas! Amadour, what can prompt you to seek after a thing that can afford you no satisfaction, and thus afflict me with the profoundest grief? You made trial of my inclinations in the days of my youth and earliest beauty, and they perhaps served to excuse your passion; but I am amazed that now, when I am old, and ugly, and sorrow-stricken, you should seek for what you know you can never find. I am sure you do not doubt that my mind is as it used to be, and so by force alone can you obtain what you desire. If you observe the condition of my face, and lay aside the memory of the beauty that once you saw in it, you will have no inclination to draw any nearer; and if you still retain within

you any remnants of your past love, it is impossible that pity will not subdue your frenzy. To this pity, which I have often found in you, I appeal with prayers for mercy. Suffer me to live in peace, and in that honour which by your own counsel I have resolved to preserve. But if the love you once bore me is now turned to hate, and you desire, in vengeance rather than in love, to make me the unhappiest woman alive, I protest to you that it shall not be so. You will force me against my will to make your evil purpose known to her who thinks so highly of you; and you may be sure that, when she learns it, your life will not be safe."

But Amadour interrupted her.

"If I must die," he said, "I shall be the sooner rid of my torment. The disfigurement of your face, which I believe is of your own seeking, shall not restrain me from making you mine. Though I could have nothing but your bones, I would yet hold them close to me."

When Florida saw that prayers, reasoning, and tears were alike of no avail, and that while he cruelly pursued his evil purpose she lacked the strength to resist him, she summoned the aid which she dreaded as greatly as death, and in a sad and piteous voice called as loudly as she could upon her mother. The Countess, hearing

her daughter's cries, had grave misgivings of the truth, and hastened into the room with all possible speed.

Amadour, who was not so ready to die as he affirmed, desisted promptly from his enterprise; and when the lady opened the door she found him close beside it, and Florida some distance from him. "Amadour," said the Countess, "what is the matter? Tell me the truth."

Amadour, who was never at a loss for invention, replied with a pale and daunted face—

"Alas! madam, what change is this in the lady Florida? I was never so astonished before, for, as I have told you, I thought I had a share in her favour; but I now see clearly that I have lost it all. While she was being brought up by you, she was, I think, no less discreet or virtuous than she is at present; however, she had then no qualms of conscience about speaking with any one. But now, when I sought to look at her, she would not suffer me to do so. When I saw this behaviour on her part I thought I must be dreaming, and asked her for her hand to kiss it after the manner of the country. This she utterly refused me. I acknowledge, madam, that then I acted wrongfully, and I entreat your pardon for it; for I took her hand, as it were by force, and kissed it. I asked nothing more

of her, but I believe that she intends my death, for she called out to you as you know. Why she did this I cannot tell, unless indeed she feared that I had some other purpose in view. Nevertheless, madam, be this as it may, I confess that I am in the wrong; for although she ought to love all who are devoted to you, fortune wills it that I, who am of all most attached to her, am banished from her good graces. Still, I shall ever continue the same both to you and to her; and I entreat you to continue me in your good favour since, by no fault of my own, I have now lost hers."

The Countess, who partly believed and partly suspected him, went up to her daughter and asked—"Why did you call me so loudly?"

Florida replied that she had felt afraid; and, although the Countess questioned her minutely on many points, she would give no other reply. Finding that she had escaped from her enemy she deemed him sufficiently punished by the failure of his attempt.

After the Countess had had a long conversation with Amadour, she suffered him to speak again in her presence with Florida, to see how he would behave. He said but little, save that he thanked her for not having confessed the truth to her mother, and begged that since she

had expelled him from her heart, she would at least allow no other to take his place.

"If my voice had not been my only means of defending myself," she replied, "it would never have been heard; and from me you shall have no worse punishment, if you do not force me to it by troubling me again as you have done. Do not fear that I can ever love another; since I have not found the good I wished for in a heart that I considered to be the most virtuous in the world, I do not expect to find it in any man. This evil fortune will henceforth free me of all the passion that love can give."

With these words she bade him farewell.

Her mother, who had been watching her face, was unable to form any opinion; though from that time forth she clearly saw that her daughter had lost all affection for Amadour. She imagined her so devoid of reason as to hate everything that she herself loved; and from that hour she warred with her in a strange way, spending seven years without speaking to her except in anger, all which she did at Amadour's request.

Meanwhile, on account of her mother's harsh treatment, Florida's former dread of being with her husband was changed into a desire of never leaving him. Seeing, however, that all her efforts were useless, she resolved to deceive Amadour,

and laying aside her coldness for a day or two, she advised him to pay court to a lady who, she said, had been speaking of their love.

This lady lived with the Queen of Spain, and was called Loretta. Amadour believed the story, and, thinking that he might in this way regain Florida's good graces, he made love to Loretta, who was the wife of a captain, one of the viceroys of the King of Spain. She, in her pleasure at having gained such a lover, showed so much elation that the affair was rumoured abroad. Even the Countess of Aranda, who was at Court, had knowledge of it, and thenceforward treated Florida less harshly than before.

One day Florida heard that the captain, Loretta's husband, had grown jealous, and was resolved to kill Amadour in one way or another as best he might. In spite of her altered treatment of Amadour, Florida did not desire that evil should befall him, and so she immediately informed him of what she had heard. He was quite ready to hark back again to his first love, and thereupon told her that, if she would grant him three hours of her conversation every day, he would never again speak to Loretta. But this she would not grant. "Then," said Amadour, "if you will not give me life, why prevent me from dying, unless indeed you hope to make me suffer more pain

during life than any death could cause? But though death shun me, I will seek it until I find it; then only shall I have rest."

While they were on this footing, news came that the King of Granada[22] was entering upon a great war against the King of Spain. The latter, therefore, sent the Prince, his son,[23] to the war, and with him the Constable of Castille and the Duke of Alba,[24] two old and prudent lords. The Duke of Cardona and the Count of Aranda were unwilling to remain behind, and prayed the King to give them some command. This he did as befitted their rank, and gave them into the safe keeping of Amadour, who performed such extraordinary deeds during the war, that they seemed to be acts as much of despair as of bravery.

Coming now to the point of my story, I have to relate how his overboldness was proved by his death. The Moors had made a show of offering battle, and finding the Christian army very numerous had feigned a retreat. The Spaniards

[22] The last King of Granada was Mahomed Boabdil, dethroned in 1493. The title may have been assumed, however, by the leader of an insurrection.—D.

[23] As Ferdinand and Isabella had no son, the reference must be to their daughter's husband, Philip the Fair of Austria, son of the Emperor Maximilian I. and father of Charles V.—B. J.

[24] Frederick of Toledo, Marquis of Coria and Duke of Alba, generally called the old Duke of Alba to distinguish him from his son.—B. J.

started in pursuit, but the old Constable and the Duke of Alba, who suspected the trickery of the Moors, restrained the Prince of Spain against his will from crossing the river. The Count of Aranda, however, and the Duke of Cardona crossed, although it was forbidden; and when the Moors saw that they were pursued by only a few men they faced about again. The Duke of Cardona was struck down and killed with a blow of a scimitar, and the Count of Aranda was so grievously wounded that he was left for dead. Thereupon Amadour came up filled with rage and fury, and bursting through the throng, caused the two bodies to be taken up and carried to the camp of the Prince, who mourned for them as for his own brothers. On examining their wounds the Count of Aranda was found to be still alive, and was sent in a litter to his home, where he lay ill for a long time. On the other hand, the Duke's body was sent back to Cardona.

Meanwhile Amadour, having made this effort to rescue the two bodies, had thought so little of his own safety that he found himself surrounded by a large number of Moors. Not desiring his person to be captured any more than he had captured that of his mistress, nor to break his faith with God as he had broken faith with her—for he knew that, if he were taken to the King

of Granada, he must either die a cruel death or renounce Christianity—he resolved to withhold from his enemies the glory either of his death or capture. So kissing the cross of his sword and commending his body and soul to God, he dealt himself such a thrust as to be past all help.

Thus died the unhappy Amadour, lamented as deeply as his virtues deserved. The news spread through the whole of Spain; and the rumour of it came to Florida, who was at Barcelona, where her husband had formerly commanded that he should be buried. She gave him an honourable funeral,[25] and then, without saying anything to

[25] The Franciscan monastery of the little village of Bellpuig, near Lerida, contains the tomb of Ramon de Cardona, termed one of the marvels of Catalonia on account of the admirable sculptures adorning it. One of the beautiful white marble bas-reliefs shows a number of galleys drawn up in line of battle, whilst some smaller boats are conveying parties of armed men to a river-bank on which the Moors are awaiting them in hostile array. On the frieze of an arch the Spaniards and Moors are shown fighting, many of the former retreating towards the water. An inscription records that the tomb was raised to the best of husbands by Isabella, his unhappy spouse.

Margaret gives the name of Florida to the wife of the Duke whom she mentions, but it should be borne in mind that she has systematically mingled fact with fiction throughout this story; and that she was alluding to the Duke buried at Bellpuig seems evident from an examination of the bas-reliefs mentioned above. Ramon de Cardona was, however, a more important personage than she pictures him. He became Charles V.'s viceroy in Naples, and did not die till 1520, whereas Margaret's story appears to end in or about 1513. Possibly she saw the tomb when in Spain.—ED.

her mother or mother-in-law, she became a nun in the Convent of Jesus, taking for husband and lover Him who had delivered her from such a violent love as that of Amadour's, and from such great affliction as she had endured in the company of her husband. Thus were all her affections directed to the perfect loving of God; and, after living for a long time as a nun, she yielded up her soul with gladness, like that of the bride when she goes forth to meet the bridegroom.

"I am well aware, ladies, that this long tale may have been wearisome to some among you, but had I told it as it was told to me it would have been longer still. Take example, I beg you, by the virtue of Florida, but be somewhat less cruel; and think not so well of any man that, when you are undeceived, you occasion him a cruel death and yourselves a life of sorrow."

Having had a long and fair hearing Parlamente said to Hircan—

"Do you not think that this lady was pressed to extremities and that she held out virtuously?"

"No," said Hircan; "a woman can make no more feeble resistance than to cry out. If she had been in a place where none could hear her I do not know how she would have fared. And if Amadour had had more love and less fear he would not have desisted from his attempt for so little. So this story will not cause me to change my firm opinion that

no man ever perfectly loved a lady, or was loved by her, that he did not prove successful if only he went the right way to work. Nevertheless, I must praise Amadour for having in part done his duty."

"What duty?" asked Oisille. "Do you call it a lover's duty to try and take his mistress by force when he owes her all reverence and submission?"

Here Saffredent took up the discourse.

"Madam," he said, "when our mistresses hold their state in chamber or hall, seated at their ease as though they were our judges, we lead them to the dance in fear; we wait upon them with all diligence and anticipate their commands; and we are so afraid of offending them and so desirous of doing them service that those who see us pity us, and often deem us more witless than brutes. They account us dull and void of understanding, and give praise to the ladies, whose faces are so imperious and their speech so fair that they make themselves feared, loved, and honoured by those who only know them outwardly. But when we are together in private, and love alone can judge our behaviour, we know full well that they are women and we are men. Then is the name 'mistress' changed to 'sweetheart,' and the 'slave' becomes a 'lover.' As the proverb says—'By service true and loyalty, do servants rise to mastery.' They have honour equally with men, who can give it to them and can take it away; and seeing us suffer in patience, they should reward us when they can do so without hurt to their honour."

"You do not speak of that true honour," said Longarine, "which is the greatest happiness this world can give. If every one calls me a virtuous woman, and I myself know the contrary, the praise I receive only increases my shame and puts me in secret to still greater confusion. In the same way, if people condemn me and I know that I am innocent, their condemnation will only make me the better pleased with myself."

"In spite of what you all have said," interposed Geburon, "it seems to me that Amadour was as noble and virtuous a knight as ever lived, and I think I can recognise him under his feigned name. Since Parlamente would not name him, neither will I. But you may rest assured that, if he be the man whom I have in mind, his heart never knew fear, nor was ever void of love and bravery."

"The day has been spent so pleasantly," said Oisille, "that if the others are like it I think our talk will make the time pass quickly by. But see where the sun is, and listen to the abbey bell, which has long been calling us to vespers. I did not mention this to you before, for I was more inclined to hear the end of the story than to go to prayers."

At these words they all rose, and when they reached the abbey they found that the monks had been waiting for them a full hour and more. After vespers they went to supper, and during the whole evening they conversed about the stories they had heard, all of them searching every corner of their

memories to try and make the second day as pleasant as the first. And after playing many games in the meadow they went to bed, and so made a glad and happy ending of the first day.

SECOND DAY.

On the Second Day is recounted the first conceit that presents itself to each.

SECOND DAY.

PROLOGUE.

On the morrow they rose in great eagerness to return to the place where they had had so much pleasure on the previous day. Each one was ready with a tale, and was impatient for the telling of it. They listened to the reading of Madame Oisille, and then heard mass, all commending themselves to God, and praying Him to grant them speech and grace for the continuance of their fellowship. Afterwards they went to dinner, reminding one another the while of many stories of the past.

After dinner, they rested in their apartments, and at the appointed time returned to the meadow, where day and season alike seemed favourable to their plans. They all sat down on the natural seat afforded by the green sward, and Parlamente said—

"Yesterday I told the tenth and last tale; it is therefore for me to choose who shall begin to-day. Madame Oisille was the first of the ladies to speak, as being the oldest and wisest, and so I now give my vote to the youngest—I do not also say the flightiest

—for I am sure that if we all follow her leading we shall not delay vespers so long as we did yesterday. Wherefore, Nomerfide, you shall lead us, but I beg that you will not cause us to begin our second day in tears."

"There was no need to make that request," said Nomerfide, "for one of our number has made me choose a tale which has taken such a hold on me that I can tell no other; and should it occasion sadness in you, your natures must be melancholy ones indeed."

TALE XI. (A).

Madame de Roncex, while at the monastery of the Grey Friars at Thouars,[1] *was constrained to go in great haste to a certain place, and, not looking to see whether the seats were clean, sat down in a filthy spot and befouled both her person and clothes; whereupon crying out for assistance, in the hope that some woman would come and cleanse her, she was waited on by men, who beheld her in the worst plight in which a woman could be found.*[2]

IN the household of Madame de la Trémoille there was a lady named Roncex, who one day, when her mistress had gone to visit the monastery of the Grey Friars, found herself in great need to

[1] In the department of the Deux-Sèvres.—ED.

[2] This story, given in Boaistuau's version of Margaret's tales, and to be found in most of the MS. copies of the *Heptameron* at the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, was not included in the edition issued by Gruget, who replaced it by a story called *The Jests made by a Grey Friar*, for which see *post*, p. 95 *et seq.*—ED.

go to a certain place whither her maid could not go in her stead. She took with her a girl named La Mothe to keep her company, but being modest and unwilling to be seen, left her in the room, and went alone into a darksome privy, a place used in common by all the friars, who had given such a good account therein of all their victuals, that seat and floor, and in sooth the whole place, were thickly covered with the must of Bacchus and Ceres that had passed through the friars' bellies.

The unhappy lady, who was so hard pressed that she had scarcely time to lift her dress, chanced to sit down in the foulest, dirtiest spot in the whole place, where she found herself stuck fast as though with glue, her poor hips, garments, and feet being so contaminated that she durst not take a step or turn on any side, for fear lest she should meet with something worse. Thereupon she began to call out as loudly as she could—

"La Mothe, my child, I am ruined and undone!"

The poor girl, who had formerly heard tell of the wickedness of the Grey Friars, and imagined that some of them were hidden there and were trying to take her mistress by force, thereupon ran off as hard as she could, saying to every one she met—

"Come and help Madame de Roncex; the Grey Friars are trying to ravish her in yonder privy."

They thereupon hastened thither with all speed, and found the unhappy lady crying out for assistance, longing for some woman to come and cleanse her, and with her back parts all uncovered, for she feared to touch them with her garments lest these also should be defiled.

The gentlemen, coming in at her cries, beheld this fine sight, but could see nought of the Grey Friars, unless it were their ordure clinging to her hips; nor did this pass without laughter on their part and great shame on hers, for instead of having women to cleanse her, she was waited on by men, who saw her naked, and in the sorriest plight in which a woman could be found. For this reason, on perceiving them, she soiled what was still clean, by dropping her garments in order to cover herself, forgetting the filth that she was in for the shame she felt at sight of the men. And when she had come out of that foul place it was necessary to strip her naked and change all her garments before she could leave the monastery. She was minded to be angry with La Mothe for the aid that she had brought her, but finding that the poor girl had thought

her in a yet more evil plight, she put aside her wrath and laughed like the rest.[3]

"I think, ladies," said Nomerfide, "that this story has proved neither long nor melancholy, and that I have given you what you expected."

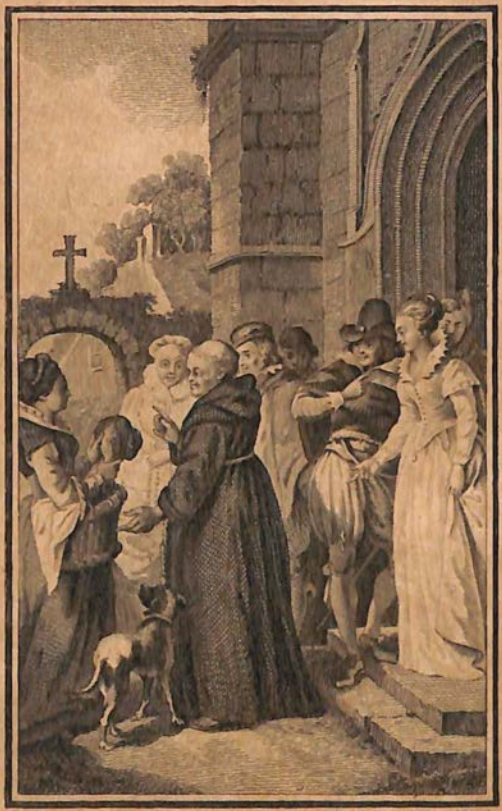
At this the company laughed heartily, and Oisille said—"The story is indeed nasty and unclean, yet, knowing the persons who fared in this manner, we cannot consider it unwelcome. Gladly would I have seen the faces of La Mothe and of the lady to whom she brought such timely aid. But now," she added to Nomerfide, "since you have finished so soon, give your vote to some one whose thoughts are of a graver turn."

"Since you desire me to atone for my fault," answered Nomerfide, "I give my vote to Dagoucin, whose discretion is such that he would die rather than say anything foolish."

Dagoucin then thanked her for the esteem in which

[3] It is impossible to identify the lady mentioned in this story, her name being spelt in so many ways in the various MSS. of the *Heptameron*. It is given as Roncex in the copy here followed, as Roubex in a copy that belonged to Louis XVIII., and as Roncei in the De Thou MS., whilst Boaistuau printed it as Roucey. The Madame de la Trémoille, alluded to at the outset, is believed by Lacroix and Dillaye to have been Anne de Laval (daughter of Guy XV., Count of Laval, and of Charlotte of Aragon, Princess of Tarento), who married Francis de la Trémoille, Viscount of Thouars, in 1521, and was by her mother a cousin of Queen Margaret. Possibly, however, the reference is to Gabrielle de Bourbon, wife of Louis II. de la Trémoille, a lady of exemplary piety, who erected the beautiful Renaissance chapel of the château of Thouars.—L. & ED.

she held his good sense, and thus began—"The story I am minded to relate is intended to show you how love blinds the greatest and most honourable hearts, and how hard it is to overcome wickedness by any kindness whatsoever."



S. Freudenberg inv. *De Longueil Graveur du Roi Sculp.*

TALE XI. (B).

Of the jests made by a Grey Friar in his sermons.[1]

NEAR the town of Bléré in Touraine there is a village called St. Martin-le-Beau, whither a Grey Friar belonging to the monastery at Tours was summoned to preach during the seasons of Advent and Lent. This friar, who was more garrulous than learned, and now and then found himself at a loss for matter to eke out his hour, would thereupon begin telling tales which more or less agreeably satisfied the good villagers.

One Holy Thursday he preached about the Paschal Lamb, and while speaking of how it was eaten at night, seeing that there were present at

[1] See *ante*, p. 89, note 2, and *post*, Appendix B.

the preaching some handsome young ladies of Amboise, who were newly arrived to keep Easter at the village, and to stay there for a few days afterwards, he wished to surpass himself, and thereupon asked all the women-folk whether they knew what it was to eat raw flesh at night. "I will tell you what it is, ladies," he said, whereat the young men of Amboise, who had just arrived with their wives, sisters, and nieces, and who had no knowledge of the pilgrim's humour, began to be scandalised; though on listening further their indignation gave place to laughter, even when he said that to eat the lamb it was needful to have one's loins girt, one's feet in one's shoes, and one's hand on one's staff.

The friar, seeing them laugh at this, and guessing the reason, immediately corrected himself. "Well," said he, "to have shoes on one's feet and a staff in one's hand; 'tis all one."

That this sally was received with laughter you will readily believe. Even the ladies could not refrain from merriment, and for them he added other diverting sayings. Then finding the time was nearly up, and wishing the ladies to be well pleased with him when they departed, he said to them—"Now, fair ladies, when you are chatting presently with your gossips, you will be asking one another: 'Who, pray, is this Master Friar,

that speaks out so boldly? He must be a brisk fellow.' I will tell you, ladies, yes, I will tell you, and be not astonished if I speak out boldly, for I am of Anjou, at your service."

With these words he ended his sermon, leaving his hearers more disposed to laugh at his foolish speeches than to weep in memory of our Lord's Passion which was then being commemorated.

The other sermons that he preached during the festival had much the same value. You are aware that these friars never fail to go begging for their Easter eggs, and receive not only eggs, but many other things, such as linen, yarn, chitterlings, hams, chines, and similar trifles. So when Easter Tuesday came, and the friar was making those exhortations to charity of which such folks as he are no niggards, he said—

"I am bound to thank you, ladies, for the liberality you have shown to our poor monastery, and yet I cannot forbear telling you that you have hitherto not duly considered the nature of our wants. You have for the most part given us chitterlings, but of these we ourselves have no lack. God be praised, our monastery is indeed full of them. What then can we do with so many? I will tell you. My advice, ladies, is that you should mix your hams with our chitterlings; in this way you would bestow fine alms."

Then, continuing his sermon, he brought into it certain scandalous matter, and, whilst discoursing upon it somewhat bluntly and quoting sundry examples, he said in apparent amazement—

"Truly, ladies and gentlemen of Saint-Martin, I am greatly astonished that you should be scandalised so unreasonably at what is less than nothing, and should tell tales of me wherever you go, saying: 'It is a big business; who could have thought that the father would have got his landlady's daughter with child?' A monk get a girl with child!" he continued; "forsooth, what a wonder! But hark you, fair ladies, would you not rather have had cause for wonderment, had the girl acted thus by the monk?"

"Such, ladies, was the wholesome food on which this worshipful shepherd fed the Lord's flock. And so brazen was he, that after committing the sin, he spake openly of it in the pulpit, where nought should be said that tends to aught but the edification of one's neighbour, and above all to the glory of God."

"Truly," said Saffredent, "he was a master monk —I should have liked him nearly as well as Brother Anjibaut, who gets credit for all the jests that are spoken in merry company."

"For my part, I can see nothing laughable in such mockery," said Oisille, "especially in such a place."

"You forget, madam," said Nomerfide, "that at

that time, though it was not so very long ago, the good villagers, and indeed most of the dwellers in the large towns, who think themselves cleverer than other people, had greater regard for such preachers as he than for those who purely and simply preached the holy Gospel to them."

"However that may be," said Hircan, "he was not wrong in asking for hams in exchange for chitterlings, for in hams there is far more eating. And even if some devout creature had understood him amphibologically, as I believe he wished to be understood, neither he nor his brethren would have fared badly any more than the wench that had her bag full."

"But how impudent of him," said Oisille, "to pervert the meaning of the text to suit his fancy, thinking that he had to do with beasts like himself, and shamelessly trying to entice the poor little women so that he might teach them how to eat raw flesh at night."

"True," said Simontault; "but you forget that he saw before him those young tripe-sellers of Amboise in whose tub he would fain have washed his—— shall I name it? No, but you understand me—and have treated them to a taste of it, not roasted, but stirring and frisking, so as to please them the more."

"Softly, softly, Simontault," said Parlamente; "you forget yourself. Have you laid aside your accustomed modesty to don it only in time of necessity?"

"No, madam, no," said he; "'twas the unworthy monk that led me astray. Wherefore, that we may return to the matter in hand, I beg Nomerfide, who

caused my offence, to give her vote to some one who will make the company forget our common fault."

"Since you include me in your transgression," said Nomerfide, "I will choose one who will atone for our failings, that is Dagoucin. He is so discreet that to save his life he would not say a foolish thing."

TALE XII.

The Duke of Florence, having continually failed to make known to a certain lady the love he bore her, confided in her brother, and begged his assistance that he might attain his ends. This, after many remonstrances, the brother agreed to give, but it was a lip-promise only, for at the moment when the Duke was expecting to vanquish her whom he had deemed invincible, the gentleman slew him in his bed, in this fashion freeing his country from a tyrant, and saving both his own life and the honour of his house.[1]

TEN years ago there reigned in the city of Florence a Duke of the house of Medici who had married

[1] The basis of this story is historical. The event here described —one of the most famous in the annals of Florence—furnished Alfred de Musset with the subject of his play *Lorenzaccio*, and served as the foundation of *The Traitor*, considered to be Shirley's highest achievement as a dramatic poet. As Queen Margaret's narrative contains various errors of fact, Sismondi's account of the affair, as borrowed by him from the best Italian historians, is given in the Appendix, C.—ED.

the Emperor's natural daughter, Margaret.[2] She was still so young that the marriage could not be lawfully consummated, and, waiting till she should be of a riper age, the Duke treated her with great gentleness, and to spare her, made love to various ladies of the city, whom he was wont to visit at night, whilst his wife was sleeping.

Among these there was one very beautiful, discreet, and honourable lady, sister to a gentle-

[2] The Duke here referred to was Alexander de' Medici, first Duke of Florence, in which city he was born in 1510. His mother, a slave named Anna, was the wife of a Florentine coachman, but Lorenzo II. de' Medici, one of this woman's lovers, acknowledged him as his offspring, though, according to some accounts, his real father was one of the popes, Clement VII. or Julius II. After the Emperor Charles V. had made himself master of Florence in 1530, he confided the governorship of the city to Alexander, upon whom he bestowed the title of Duke. Two years later Alexander threw off the imperial control, and soon afterwards embarked on a career of debauchery and crime. In 1536, Charles V., being desirous of obtaining the support of Florence against France, treated with Alexander, and gave him the hand of his illegitimate daughter, Margaret. The latter—whose mother was Margaret van Gheenst, a Flemish damsel of noble birth—was at that time barely fourteen, having been born at Brussels in 1522. The Queen of Navarre's statements concerning the youthfulness of the Duchess are thus corroborated by fact. After the death of Alexander de' Medici, his widow was married to Octavius Farnese, Duke of Parma, who was then only twelve years old, but by whom she eventually became the mother of the celebrated Alexander Farnese. Margaret of Austria occupies a prominent place in the history of the Netherlands, which she governed during a lengthy period for her brother Philip II. She died in retirement at Ortonna in Italy in 1586. —L. and ED.

man whom the Duke loved even as himself, and to whom he gave such authority in his household that his orders were feared and obeyed equally with the Duke's own. And moreover the Duke had no secrets that he did not share with this gentleman, so that the latter might have been called his second-self.[3]

Finding the gentleman's sister to be a lady of such exemplary virtue that he was unable to declare his passion to her, though he sought all possible opportunities for doing so, the Duke at last came to his favourite and said to him—

"If there were anything in this world, my friend, that I might be unwilling to do for you, I should hesitate to tell you what is in my mind, and still more to beg your assistance. But such is the affection I bear you that had I wife, mother, or daughter who could avail to save your life,

[3] The gentleman here mentioned was the Duke's cousin, Lorenzo di Pier-Francesco de' Medici, commonly called Lorenzino on account of his short stature. He was born at Florence in 1514, and, being the eldest member of the junior branch of the Medici family, it had been decided by the Emperor Charles V. that he should succeed to the Dukedom of Florence, if Alexander died without issue. Lorenzino cultivated letters, and is said to have possessed considerable wit, but, on the other hand, instead of being a high-minded man, as Queen Margaret pictures him, he was a thorough profligate, and willingly lent a hand in Alexander's scandalous amours. The heroine of this story is erroneously described as Lorenzino's sister; in point of fact she was his aunt, Catherine Ginori. See Appendix, C.—ED.

I would sacrifice them rather than allow you to die in torment. I believe that your love for me is the counterpart of mine for you, and that if I, who am your master, bear you so much affection, you, on your part, can have no less for me. I will therefore tell you a secret, the keeping of which has brought me to the condition you see. I have no hope of any improvement except it be through death or else the service which you are in a position to render me."

On hearing these words from the Duke, and seeing his face unfeignedly bathed in tears, the gentleman felt such great pity for him that he said—

"Sir, I am your creature: all the wealth and honour that I am possessed of in this world come from you. You may speak to me as to your own soul, in the certainty that all that it be in my power to do is at your command."

Thereupon the Duke began to tell him of the love he bore his sister, a love so deep and strong that he feared he could not live much longer unless, by the gentleman's help, he succeeded in satisfying his desire. He was well aware that neither prayers nor presents would be of any avail with the lady, wherefore he begged the gentleman—if he cared for his master's life as much as he, his master, cared for his—to devise

some means of procuring him the good fortune which, without such assistance, he could never hope to obtain.

The brother, who loved his sister and the honour of his house far more than the Duke's pleasure, endeavoured to remonstrate with him, entreating that he might be employed for any other purpose save the cruel task of soliciting the dishonour of his own kin, and declaring that the rendering of such a service was contrary alike to his inclinations and his honour.

Inflamed with excessive wrath, the Duke raised his hand to his mouth and bit his nails.

"Well," said he in a fury, "since I find that you have no friendship for me, I know what I have to do."

The gentleman, who was acquainted with his master's cruelty, felt afraid, and answered—

"My lord, since such is your pleasure, I will speak to her, and tell you her reply."

"If you show concern for my life, I shall show it for yours," replied the Duke, and thereupon he went away.

The gentleman well understood the meaning of these words, and spent a day or two without seeing the Duke, considering what he should do. On the one hand he was confronted by the duty he owed his master, and the wealth and honours

he had received from him; on the other by the honour of his house, and the fair fame and chastity of his sister. He well knew that she would never submit to such infamy unless through his own treachery she were overcome by violence, so unnatural a deed that if it were committed he and his kindred would be disgraced for ever. In this dilemma he decided that he would sooner die than so ill use his sister, who was one of the noblest women in all Italy, and ought rather to deliver his country of this tyrant who, abusing his power, sought to cast such a slur upon his family; for he felt sure that if the Duke were suffered to live, neither his own life nor the lives of his kindred would be safe. So without speaking of the matter to his sister or to any living creature, he determined to save his life and vindicate his honour at one and the same time. Accordingly, when a couple of days had gone by, he went to the Duke and told him that with infinite difficulty he had so wrought upon his sister that she had at last consented to do his will, provided that the matter were kept secret, and none but he, her brother, knew of it.

The Duke, who was longing for these tidings, readily believed them, and embracing the ambassador, promised him anything that he might ask. He begged him to put his scheme quickly into execution, and they agreed together upon the

time when this should be done. The Duke was in great joy, as may well be imagined; and on the arrival of that wished-for night when he hoped to vanquish her whom he had deemed invincible, he retired early, accompanied only by the lady's brother, and failed not to attire himself in a perfumed shirt and head-gear. Then, when every one was gone to rest, he went with the gentleman to the lady's abode, where he was conducted into a well-appointed apartment.

Having undressed him and put him to bed, the gentleman said—

"My lord, I will now go and fetch you one who will assuredly not enter this room without blushing; but I hope that before morning she will have lost all fear of you."

Leaving the Duke, he then went to his own room, where he found one of his servants, to whom he said—

"Are you brave enough to follow me to a place where I desire to avenge myself upon my greatest living enemy?"

The other, who was ignorant of his master's purpose, replied—

"Yes, sir, though it were the Duke himself."

Thereupon the gentleman led him away in such haste as to leave him no time to take any weapon except a poignard that he was wearing.

The Duke, on hearing the gentleman coming back again, thought that he was bringing the loved one with him, and, opening his eyes, drew back the curtains in order to see and welcome the joy for which he had so long been waiting. But instead of seeing her who, so he hoped, was to preserve his life, he beheld something intended to take his life away, that is, a naked sword which the gentleman had drawn, and with which he smote the Duke. The latter was wearing nothing but his shirt, and lacked weapons, though not courage, for sitting up in the bed he seized the gentleman round the body, saying—

"Is this the way you keep your promise?"

Then, armed as he was only with his teeth and nails, he bit the gentleman's thumb, and wrestled with him so stoutly that they both fell down beside the bed.

The gentleman, not feeling altogether confident, called to his servant, who, finding the Duke and his master so closely twined together that he could not tell the one from the other, dragged them both by the feet into the middle of the room, and then tried to cut the Duke's throat with his poignard. The Duke defended himself until he was so exhausted through loss of blood that he could do no more, whereupon the gentleman and his servant lifted him upon the bed and finished

him with their daggers. They then drew the curtain and went away, leaving the dead body shut up in the room.

Having vanquished his great enemy, by whose death he hoped to free his country, the gentleman reflected that his work would be incomplete unless he treated five or six of the Duke's kindred in the same fashion. The servant, however, who was neither a dare-devil nor a fool, said to him—

"I think, sir, that you have done enough for the present, and that it would be better to think of saving your own life than of taking the lives of others, for should we be as long in making away with each of them as we were in the case of the Duke, daylight would overtake our enterprise before we could complete it, even should we find our enemies unarmed."

Cowed by his guilty conscience, the gentleman followed the advice of his servant, and taking him alone with him, repaired to a Bishop[4] whose office it was to have the city gates opened, and to give orders to the guard-posts.

"I have," said the gentleman to the Bishop, "this evening received tidings that one of my brothers is at the point of death. I have just asked leave of the Duke to go to him, and he has

[4] Probably Cardinal Cybo, Alexander's chief minister, who according to Sismondi, was the first to discover the murder.—ED.

granted it me; and I beg you to send orders that the guards may furnish me with two good horses, and that the gatekeeper may let me through."

The Bishop, who regarded the gentleman's request in the same light as an order from his master the Duke, forthwith gave him a note, by means of which the gate was opened for him, and horses supplied to him as he had requested; but instead of going to see his brother he betook himself straight to Venice, where he had himself cured of the bites that he had received from the Duke, and then passed over into Turkey.[5]

In the morning, finding that their master delayed his return so long, all the Duke's servants suspected, rightly enough, that he had gone to

[5] On leaving Florence, Lorenzo repaired first to Bologna and then to Venice, where he informed Philip Strozzi of how he had rid his country of the tyrant. After embracing him in a transport, and calling him the Tuscan Brutus, Strozzi asked the murderer's sisters, Laudamina and Magdalen de' Medici, in marriage for his own sons, Peter and Robert. From Venice Lorenzino issued a *mémoire justificatif*, full of quibbles and paradoxes, in which he tried to explain his lack of energy after the murder by the indifference shown by the Florentines. He took no part in the various enterprises directed against Cosmo de' Medici, who had succeeded Alexander at Florence. Indeed his chief concern was for his own safety, which was threatened alike by Cosmo and the Emperor Charles V., and to escape their emissaries he proceeded to Turkey, and thence to France, ultimately returning to Venice, where, despite all his precautions against danger, he was assassinated in 1547, together with his uncle, Soderini, by some spadassins in the pay of Cosmo I.—ED.

see some lady; but at last, as he still failed to return, they began seeking him on all sides. The poor Duchess, who was beginning to love him dearly, was sorely distressed on learning that he could not be found; and as the gentleman to whom he bore so much affection was likewise nowhere to be seen, some went to his house in quest of him. They found blood on the threshold of the gentleman's room, which they entered, but he was not there, nor could any servant or other person give any tidings of him. Following the blood-stains, however, the Duke's servants came at last to the room in which their master lay. The door of it was locked, but this they soon broke open, and on seeing the floor covered with blood they drew back the bed-curtain, and found the unhappy Duke's body lying in the bed, sleeping the sleep from which one cannot awaken.

You may imagine the mourning of these poor servants as they carried the body to the palace, whither came the Bishop, who told them how the gentleman had departed with all speed during the night under pretence of going to see his brother. And by this it was clearly shown that it was he who had committed the murder. And it was further proved that his poor sister had known nothing whatever of the matter. For

her part, albeit she was astounded by what had happened, she could but love her brother the more, seeing that he had not shrunk from risking his life in order to save her from so cruel a tyrant. And so honourable and virtuous was the life that she continued leading, that although she was reduced to poverty by the confiscation of the family property, both she and her sister found as honourable and wealthy husbands as there were in all Italy, and lived ever afterwards in high and good repute.

"This, ladies, is a story that should make you dread that little god who delights in tormenting Prince and peasant, strong and weak, and so far blinds them that they lose all thought of God and conscience, and even of their own lives. And greatly should Princes and those in authority fear to offend such as are less than they; for there is no man but can wreak injury when it pleases God to take vengeance on a sinner, nor any man so great that he can do hurt to one who is in God's care."

This tale was commended by all in the company,[6] but it gave rise to different opinions among them, for whilst some maintained that the gentleman had done his duty in saving his own life and his sister's honour, as well as in ridding his country of such a tyrant, others denied this, and said it was rank ingratitude

[6] In MS. No. 1520 (Bib. Nat.) this sentence begins: "The tale was attentively listened to by all," &c.—L.

to slay one who had bestowed on him such wealth and station. The ladies declared that the gentleman was a good brother and a worthy citizen; the men, on the contrary, that he was a treacherous and wicked servant.

And pleasant was it to hear the reasons which were brought forward on both sides; but the ladies, as is their wont, spoke as much from passion as from judgment, saying that the Duke was so well worthy of death that he who struck him down was a happy man indeed.

Then Dagoucin, seeing what a controversy he had set on foot, said to them—

"In God's name, ladies, do not quarrel about a thing that is past and gone. Take care rather that your own charms do not occasion more cruel murders than the one which I have related."

"'La belle Dame sans Mercy,'[7] replied Parlamente, "has taught us to say that but few die of so pleasing an ailment."

[7] *La belle Dame sans Merci* (The Pitiless Beauty) is one of Alain Chartier's best known poems. It is written in the form of a dialogue between a lady and her lover: the former having obstinately refused to take compassion on the sufferings of her admirer, the latter is said to have died of despair. The lines alluded to by Margaret are spoken by the lady, and are to the following effect—"So graceful a malady seldom puts men to death; yet the sooner to obtain comfort, it is fitting one should say that it did. Some complain and worry greatly who have not really felt the most bitter affliction; and if indeed Love doth cause such great torment, surely it were better there should be but one sufferer rather than two." The poem, as here quoted, will be found in André Duchesne's edition of the *Œuvres de Maistre Alain Chartier*, Paris, 1617, p. 502.—L.

"Would to God, madam," answered Dagoucin, "that all the ladies in this company knew how false that saying is. I think they would then scarcely wish to be called pitiless, or to imitate that unbelieving beauty who suffered a worthy lover to die for lack of a gracious answer to his suit."

"So," said Parlamente, "you would have us risk honour and conscience to save the life of a man who says he loves us."

"That is not my meaning," replied Dagoucin, "for he who loves with a perfect love would be even more afraid of hurting his lady's honour than would she herself. I therefore think that an honourable and graceful response, such as is called for by perfect and seemly love, must tend to the increase of honour and the satisfaction of conscience, for no true lover could seek the contrary."

"That is always the end of your speeches," said Ennasuite; "they begin with honour and end with the contrary. However, if all the gentlemen present will tell the truth of the matter, I am ready to believe them on their oaths."

Hircan swore that for his own part he had never loved any woman but his own wife, and even with her had no desire to be guilty of any gross offence against God.

Simontault declared the same, and added that he had often wished all women were froward excepting his own wife.

"Truly," said Geburon to him, "you deserve that

your wife should be what you would have the others. For my own part, I can swear to you that I once loved a woman so dearly that I would rather have died than have led her to do anything that might have diminished my esteem for her. My love for her was so founded upon her virtues, that for no advantage that I might have had of her would I have seen them blemished."

At this Saffredent burst out laughing.

"Geburon," he said, "I thought that your wife's affection and your own good sense would have guarded you from the danger of falling in love elsewhere, but I see that I was mistaken, for you still use the very phrases with which we are wont to beguile the most subtle of women, and to obtain a hearing from the most discreet. For who would close her ears against us when we begin our discourse by talking of honour and virtue?[8] But if we were to show them our hearts just as they are, there is many a man now welcome among the ladies whom they would reckon of but little account. But we hide the devil in our natures under the most angelic form we can devise, and in this disguise receive many favours before we are found out. And perhaps we lead the ladies' hearts so far forward, that when they come upon vice while believing themselves on the high road to virtue, they have neither opportunity nor ability to draw back again."

"Truly," said Geburon, "I thought you a different

[8] This sentence is borrowed from MS. No. 1520 (Bib. Nat.)—L.

man than your words would show you to be, and fancied that virtue was more pleasing to you than pleasure."

"What!" said Saffredent. "Is there any virtue greater than that of loving in the way that God commands? It seems to me that it is much better to love one woman as a woman than to adore a number of women as though they were so many idols. For my part, I am firmly of opinion that use is better than abuse."

The ladies, however, all sided with Geburon, and would not allow Saffredent to continue, whereupon he said—

"I am well content to say no more on this subject of love, for I have been so badly treated with regard to it that I will never return to it again."

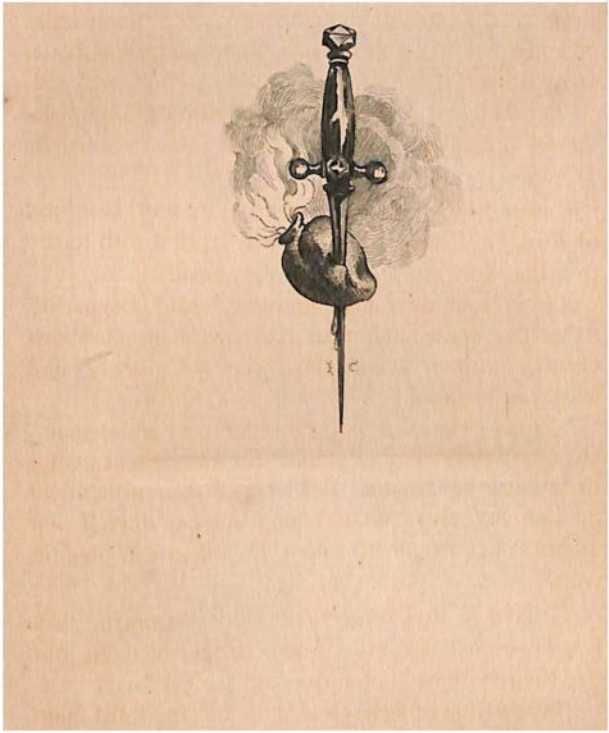
"It is your own maliciousness," said Longarine, "that has occasioned your bad treatment; for what virtuous woman would have you for a lover after what you have told us?"

"Those who did not consider me unwelcome," answered Saffredent, "would not care to exchange their virtue for yours. But let us say no more about it, that my anger may offend neither myself nor others. Let us see to whom Dagoucin will give his vote."

"I give it to Parlamente," said Dagoucin, "for I believe that she must know better than any one else the nature of honourable and perfect love."

"Since I have been chosen to tell the third tale,"

said Parlamente, "I will tell you something that happened to a lady who has always been one of my best friends, and whose thoughts have never been hidden from me."



J. Troostenberg inv.

Jn. Le Mayeur

TALE XIII.

A sea-captain, being greatly in love with a lady, sent her a diamond; but she despatched it to his wife, whom he had long neglected, and in this wise so atoned for his conduct that his wife was reconciled to him in perfect affection.[1]

IN the household of the Lady-Regent, mother of King Francis, there was a very pious lady married to a gentleman of like mind with herself, and, albeit her husband was old and she was young and pretty, she served and loved him

[1] M. Le Roux de Lincy believes that this story has some historical basis, and, Louise of Savoy being termed the Regent, he assigns the earlier incidents to the year 1524. But Louise was Regent, for the first time, in 1515, and we incline to the belief that Queen Margaret alludes to this earlier period. Note the reference to a Court journey to Normandy (*post*, p. 136), which was probably the journey that Francis I. and his mother are known to have made to Rouen and Alençon in the autumn of 1517. See vol. i. p. xxviii.—ED.

as though he had been the handsomest and youngest man in the world. So that she might give him no cause for sorrow, she set herself to live as though she were of the same age as himself, eschewing all such company, dress, dances, and amusements as young women are wont to love, and finding all her pleasure and recreation in the service of God; on which account her husband so loved and trusted her, that she ruled him and his household as she would.

One day it happened that the gentleman told his wife that from his youth up he had desired to make a journey to Jerusalem, and asked her what she thought of it. She, whose only wish was to please him, replied—

"Since God has withheld children from us, sweetheart, and has granted us sufficient wealth, I would willingly use some portion of it in making this sacred journey with you, for indeed, whether you go thither or elsewhere, I am resolved never to leave you."

At this the good man was so pleased, that it seemed to him as though he were already on Mount Calvary.

While they were deliberating on this matter, there came to the Court a gentleman, the Captain of a galley, who had often served in the wars

against the Turks,[2] and was now soliciting the King of France to undertake an expedition against one of their cities, which might yield great advantage to Christendom. The old gentleman inquired of him concerning this expedition, and after hearing what he intended to do, asked him whether, on the completion of this business, he would make another journey to Jerusalem, whither he himself and his wife had a great desire to go. The Captain was well pleased on hearing of this laudable desire, and he promised to conduct them thither, and to keep the matter secret.

The old gentleman was all impatience to find his wife and tell her of what he had done. She was as anxious to make the journey as her husband, and on that account often spoke about it to the Captain, who, paying more attention to her person than her words, fell so deeply in love with her, that when speaking to her of the voyages he had made, he often confused the port of Mar-

[2] M. Paul Lacroix, who believes that the heroine of this tale is Margaret herself (she is described as telling it under the name of Parlamente), is also of opinion that the gentleman referred to is the Baron de Malleville, a knight of Malta, who was killed at Beyrout during an expedition against the Turks, and whose death was recounted in verse by Clement Marot (*Œuvres*, 1731, vol. ii. p. 452-455). Margaret's gentleman, however, is represented as being married, whereas M. de Malleville, as a knight of Malta, was necessarily a bachelor. Marot, moreover, calls Malleville a Parisian, whereas the gentleman in the tale belonged to Normandy (see *post*, p. 136).—B. J. and L.

seilles with the Archipelago, and said "horse" when he meant to say "ship," like one distracted and bereft of sense. Her character, however, was such that he durst not give any token of the truth, and concealment kindled such fires in his heart that he often fell sick, when the lady showed as much solicitude for him as for the cross and guide of her road,[3] sending to inquire after him so often that the anxiety she showed cured him without the aid of any other medicine.

Several persons who knew that this Captain had been more renowned for valour and jollity than for piety, were amazed that he should have become so intimate with this lady, and seeing that he had changed in every respect, and frequented churches, sermons, and confessions, they suspected that this was only in order to win the lady's favour, and could not refrain from hinting as much to him.

The Captain feared that if the lady should hear any such talk he would be banished from her

[3] This may simply be an allusion to wayside crosses which serve to guide travellers on their road. M. de Montaiglon points out, however, that in the alphabets used for teaching children in the olden time, the letter A was always preceded by a cross, and that the child, in reciting, invariably began: "The cross of God, A, B, C, D," &c. In a like way, a cross figured at the beginning of the guide-books of the time, as a symbol inviting the traveller to pray, and reminding him upon whom he should rely amid the perils of his journey. The best known French guide-book of the sixteenth century is Charles Estienne's *Guide des Chemins de France*.—M. and ED.

presence, and accordingly he told her husband and herself that he was on the point of being despatched on his journey by the King, and had much to tell them, but that for the sake of greater secrecy he did not desire to speak to them in the presence of others, for which reason he begged them to send for him when they had both retired for the night. The gentleman deemed this to be good advice, and did not fail to go to bed early every evening, and to make his wife also undress.

When all their servants had left them, they used to send for the Captain, and talk with him about the journey to Jerusalem, in the midst of which the old gentleman would oft-times fall asleep with his mind full of pious thoughts. When the Captain saw the old gentleman asleep in bed, and found himself on a chair near her whom he deemed the fairest and noblest woman in the world, his heart was so rent between his desires and his dread of speaking that he often lost the power of speech. In order that she might not perceive this, he would force himself to talk of the holy places of Jerusalem where there were such signs of the great love that Jesus Christ bore us; and he would speak of this love, using it as a cloak for his own, and looking at the lady with sighs and tears which she never understood. By reason of his devout countenance she indeed

believed him to be a very holy man, and begged of him to tell her what his life had been, and how he had come to love God in that way.

He told her that he was a poor gentleman, who, to arrive at riches and honour, had disregarded his conscience in marrying a woman who was too close akin to him, and this on account of the wealth she possessed, albeit she was ugly and old, and he loved her not; and when he had drawn all her money from her, he had gone to seek his fortune at sea, and had so prospered by his toil, that he had now come to an honourable estate. But since he had made his hearer's acquaintance, she, by reason of her pious converse and good example, had changed all his manner of life, and should he return from his present enterprise he was wholly resolved to take her husband and herself to Jerusalem, that he might thereby partly atone for his grievous sins which he had now put from him; save that he had not yet made reparation to his wife, with whom, however, he hoped that he might soon be reconciled.

The lady was well pleased with this discourse, and especially rejoiced at having drawn such a man to the love and fear of God. And thus, until the Captain departed from the Court, their long conversations together were continued every evening without his ever venturing to declare

himself. However, he made the lady a present of a crucifix of Our Lady of Pity,[4] beseeching her to think of him whenever she looked upon it.

The hour of his departure arrived, and when he had taken leave of the husband, who was falling asleep, and came to bid his lady farewell, he beheld tears standing in her eyes by reason of the honourable affection which she entertained for him. The sight of these rendered his passion for her so unendurable that, not daring to say anything concerning it, he almost fainted, and broke out into an exceeding sweat, so that he seemed to weep not only with his eyes, but with his entire body. And thus he departed without speaking, leaving the lady in great astonishment, for she had never before seen such tokens of regret. Nevertheless she did not change in her good opinion of him, and followed him with her prayers.

After a month had gone by, however, as the lady was returning to her house, she met a gentleman who handed her a letter from the Captain, and begged her to read it in private.

[4] "Our Lady of Pity" is the designation usually applied to the Virgin when she is shown seated with the corpse of Christ on her knees. Michael Angelo's famous group at St. Peter's is commonly known by this name. In the present instance, however, Queen Margaret undoubtedly refers to a crucifix showing the Virgin at the foot of the Cross, contemplating her son's sufferings. Such crucifixes were formerly not uncommon.—M.

He told her how he had seen the Captain embark, fully resolved to accomplish whatever might be pleasing to the King and of advantage to Christianity. For his own part, the gentleman added, he was straightway going back to Marseilles to set the Captain's affairs in order.

The lady withdrew to a window by herself, and opening the letter, found it to consist of two sheets of paper, covered on either side with writing which formed the following epistle :—

"Concealment long and silence have, alas !
Brought me all comfortless to such a pass,
That now, perforce, I must, to ease my grief,
Either speak out, or seek in death relief.
Wherefore the tale I long have left untold
I now, in lonely friendlessness grown bold,
Send unto thee, for I must strive to say
My love, or else prepare myself to slay.
And though my eyes no longer may behold
The sweet, who in her hand my life doth hold,
Whose glance sufficed to make my heart rejoice,
The while my ear did listen to her voice,—
These words at least shall meet her beauteous eyes,
And tell her all the plaintive, clamorous cries
Pent in my heart, to which I must give breath,
Since longer silence could but bring me death.
And yet, at first, I was in truth full fain
To blot the words I'd written out again,
Fearing, forsooth, I might offend thine ear
With foolish phrases which, when thou wast near,
I dared not utter ; and 'Indeed,' said I,
'Far better pine in silence, aye, and die,

Than save myself by bringing her annoy
For whose sweet sake grim death itself were joy.'
And yet, thought I, my death some pain might give
To her for whom I would be strong, and live ;
For have I not, fair lady, promised plain,
My journey ended; to return again
And guide thee and thy spouse to where he now
Doth yearn to call on God from Sion's brow?
And none would lead thee thither should I die.
If I were dead, methinks I see thee sigh
In sore distress, for then thou couldst not start
Upon that journey, dear unto thy heart.
So I will live, and, in a little space,
Return to lead thee to the sacred place.
Aye, I will live, though death a boon would be
Only to be refused for sake of thee.
But if I live, I needs must straight remove
The burden from my heart, and speak my love,
That love more loyal, tender, deep, and true,
Than, ever yet, the fondest lover knew.
And now, bold words about to wing your flight,
What will ye say when ye have reached her sight?
Declare her all the love that fills my heart?
Too weak ye are to tell its thousandth part!
Can ye at least not say that her clear eyes
Have torn my hapless heart forth in such wise,
That like a hollow tree I pine and wither
Unless hers give me back some life and vigour?
Ye feeble words! ye cannot even tell
How easily her eyes a heart compel ;
Nor can ye praise her speech in language fit,
So weak and dull ye are, so void of wit.
Yet there are some things I would have you name—
How mute and foolish I oft time became
When all her grace and virtue I beheld ;
How from my 'raptured eyes tears slowly welled

The tears of hopeless love ; how my tongue strayed
From fond and wooing speech, so sore afraid,
That all my discourse was of time and tide,
And of the stars which up in Heav'n abide.
O words, alas ! ye lack the skill to tell
The dire confusion that upon me fell,
Whilst love thus wracked me ; nor can ye disclose
My love's immensity, its pains and woes.
Yet, though, for all, your powers be too weak,
Perchance, some little, ye are fit to speak—
Say to her thus : 'Twas fear lest thou shouldst chide
That drove me, e'en so long, my love to hide,
And yet, forsooth, it might have openly
Been told to God in Heaven, as unto thee,
Based as it is upon thy virtue—thought
That to my torments frequent balm hath brought,
For who, indeed, could ever deem it sin
To seek the owner of all worth to win ?
Deserving rather of our blame were he
Who having seen thee undisturbed could be.'
None such was I, for, straightway stricken sore,
My heart bowed low to Love, the conqueror.
And ah ! no false and fleeting love is mine,
Such as for painted beauty feigns to pine ;
Nor doth my passion, although deep and strong,
Seek its own wicked pleasure in thy wrong.
Nay ; on this journey I would rather die
Than know that thou hadst fallen, and that I
Had wrought thy shame and foully brought to harm
The virtue which thy heart wraps round thy form.
'Tis thy perfection that I love in thee,
Nought that might lessen it could ever be
Desire of mine—indeed, the nobler thou,
The greater were the love I to thee vow.
I do not seek an ardent flame to quench
In lustful dalliance with some merry wench,

Pure is my heart, 'neath reason's calm control
Set on a lady of such lofty soul,
That neither God above nor angel bright,
But seeing her, would echo my delight.
And if of thee I may not be beloved,
What matter, shouldst thou deem that I have proved
The truest lover that did ever live?
And this I know thou wilt, one day, believe,
For time, in rolling by, shall show to thee
No change in my heart's faith and loyalty.
And though for this thou mayst make no return,
Yet pleased am I with love for thee to burn,
And seek no recompense, pursue no end,
Save, that to thee, I meekly recommend
My soul and body, which I here consign
In sacrifice to Love's consuming shrine.
If then in safety I sail back the main
To thee, still artless, I'll return again;
And if I die, then there will die with me
A lover such as none again shall see.
So Ocean now doth carry far away
The truest lover seen for many a day;
His body 'tis that journeys o'er the wave,
But not his heart, for that is now thy slave,
And from thy side can never wrested be,
Nor of its own accord return to me.
Ah! could I with me o'er the treach'rous brine
Take aught of that pure, guileless heart of thine,
No doubt should I then feel of victory,
Whereof the glory would belong to thee.
But now, whatever fortune may befall,
I've cast the die; and having told thee all,
Abide thereby, and vow my constancy—
Emblem of which, herein, a diamond see,
By whose great firmness and whose pure glow
The strength and pureness of my love thou'lt know.

Let it, I pray, thy fair white finger press,
And thou wilt deal me more than happiness.
And, diamond, speak and say : 'To thee I come
From thy fond lover, who afar doth roam,
And strives by dint of glorious deeds to rise
To the high level of the good and wise,
Hoping some day that haven to attain,
Where thy sweet favours shall reward his pain.'"

The lady read the letter through, and was the more astonished at the Captain's passion as she had never before suspected it. She looked at the cutting of the diamond, which was a large and beautiful one, set in a ring of black enamel, and she was in great doubt as to what she ought to do with it. After pondering upon the matter throughout the night, she was glad to find that since there was no messenger, she had no occasion to send any answer to the Captain, who, she reflected, was being sufficiently tried by those matters of the King, his master, which he had in hand, without being angered by the unfavourable reply which she was resolved to make to him, though she delayed it until his return. However, she found herself greatly perplexed with regard to the diamond, for she had never been wont to adorn herself at the expense of any but her husband. For this reason, being a woman of excellent understanding, she determined to draw from the ring some profit to the Captain's conscience. She

therefore despatched one of her servants to the Captain's wife with the following letter, which was written as though it came from a nun of Tarascon :—

"MADAM,—Your husband passed this way but a short time before he embarked, and after he had confessed himself and received his Creator like a good Christian, he spoke to me of something which he had upon his conscience, namely, his sorrow at not having loved you as he should have done. And on departing, he prayed and besought me to send you this letter, with the diamond which goes with it, and which he begs of you to keep for his sake, assuring you that if God bring him back again in health and strength, you shall be better treated than ever woman was before. And this stone of steadfastness shall be the pledge thereof.

"I beg you to remember him in your prayers; in mine he will have a place as long as I live."

This letter, being finished and signed with the name of a nun, was sent by the lady to the Captain's wife. And as may be readily believed, when the excellent old woman saw the letter and the ring, she wept for joy and sorrow at being loved and esteemed by her good husband when she could no longer see him. She kissed the ring a thousand times and more, watering it with

her tears, and blessing God for having restored her husband's affection to her at the end of her days, when she had long looked upon it as lost. Nor did she fail to thank the nun who had given her so much happiness, but sent her the fairest reply that she could devise. This the messenger brought back with all speed to his mistress, who could not read it, nor listen to what her servant told her, without much laughter. And so pleased was she at having got rid of the diamond in so profitable a fashion as to bring about a reconciliation between the husband and wife, that she was as happy as though she had gained a kingdom.

A short time afterwards tidings came of the defeat and death of the poor Captain, and of how he had been abandoned by those who ought to have succoured him, and how his enterprise had been revealed by the Rhodians who should have kept it secret, so that he and all who landed with him, to the number of eighty, had been slain, among them being a gentleman named John, and a Turk to whom the lady of my story had stood godmother, both of them having been given by her to the Captain that he might take them with him on his journey. The first named of these had died beside the Captain, whilst the Turk, wounded by arrows in fifteen places, had saved himself by swimming to the French ships.

It was through him alone that the truth of the whole affair became known. A certain gentleman whom the poor Captain had taken to be his friend and comrade, and whose interests he had advanced with the King and the highest nobles of France, had, it appeared, stood out to sea with his ships as soon as the Captain landed; and the Captain, finding that his expedition had been betrayed, and that four thousand Turks were at hand, had thereupon endeavoured to retreat, as was his duty. But the gentleman in whom he put such great trust perceived that his friend's death would leave the sole command and profit of that great armament to himself, and accordingly pointed out to the officers that it would not be right to risk the King's vessels or the lives of the many brave men on board them in order to save less than a hundred persons, an opinion which was shared by all those of the officers that possessed but little courage.

So the Captain, finding that the more he called to the ships the farther they drew away from his assistance, faced round at last upon the Turks; and, albeit he was up to his knees in sand, he did such deeds of arms and valour that it seemed as though he alone would defeat all his enemies, an issue which his traitorous comrade feared far more than he desired it.

But at last, in spite of all that he could do, the Captain received so many wounds from the arrows of those who durst not approach within bowshot, that he began to lose all his blood, whereupon the Turks, perceiving the weakness of these true Christians, charged upon them furiously with their scimitars; but the Christians, so long as God gave them strength and life, defended themselves to the bitter end.

Then the Captain called to the gentleman named John, whom his lady love had given him, and to the Turk as well, and thrusting the point of his sword into the ground, fell upon his knees beside it, and embraced and kissed the cross,[5] saying—

"Lord, receive into Thy hands the soul of one who has not spared his life to exalt Thy name."

The gentleman called John, seeing that his master's life was ebbing away as he uttered these words, thought to aid him, and took him into his arms, together with the sword which he was holding. But a Turk who was behind them cut through both his thighs, whereupon he cried out, "Come, Captain, let us away to Paradise to see Him for

[5] As is well known, before swords were made with shell and stool hilts, the two guards combined with the handle and blade formed a cross. Bayard, when dying, raised his sword to gaze upon this cross, and numerous instances, similar to that mentioned above by Queen Margaret, may be found in the old *Chansons de Geste*.—M.

whose sake we die," and in this wise he shared the poor Captain's death even as he had shared his life.

The Turk, seeing that he could be of no service to either of them, and being himself wounded by arrows in fifteen places, made off towards the ships, and requested to be taken on board. But although of all the eighty he was the only one who had escaped, the Captain's traitorous comrade refused his prayer. Nevertheless, being an exceeding good swimmer, he threw himself into the sea, and exerted himself so well that he was at last received on board a small vessel, where in a short time he was cured of his wounds. And it was by means of this poor foreigner that the truth became fully known, to the honour of the Captain and the shame of his comrade, whom the King and all the honourable people who heard the tidings deemed guilty of such wickedness toward God and man that there was no death howsoever cruel which he did not deserve. But when he returned he told so many lies, and gave so many gifts, that not only did he escape punishment, but even received the office of the man whose unworthy servant he had been.

When the pitiful tidings reached the Court, the Lady-Regent, who held the Captain in high esteem, mourned for him exceedingly, as did the

King and all the honourable people who had known him. And when the lady whom he had loved the best heard of his strange, sad, and Christian death, she changed the chiding she had resolved to give him into tears and lamentations, in which her husband kept her company, all hopes of their journey to Jerusalem being now frustrated.

I must not forget to say that on the very day when the two gentlemen were killed, a damsel in the lady's service, who loved the gentleman called John better than herself, came and told her mistress that she had seen her lover in a dream; he had appeared to her clad in white, and had bidden her farewell, telling her that he was going to Paradise with his Captain. And when the damsel heard that her dream had come true, she made such lamentation that her mistress had enough to do to comfort her.[6]

A short time afterwards the Court journeyed into Normandy, to which province the Captain

[6] The Queen of Navarre was a firm believer in the truth and premonitory character of dreams, and according to her biographers she, herself, had several singular ones, two of which are referred to in the Memoir prefixed to the present work (vol. i. pp. lxxxiii. and lxxxvii.). In some of her letters, moreover, she relates that Francis I., when under the walls of Pavia, on three successive nights beheld his little daughter Charlotte (then dying at Lyons) appear to him in a dream, and on each occasion repeat the words, "Farewell, my King, I am going to Paradise."—ED.

had belonged. His wife was not remiss in coming to pay homage to the Lady-Regent, and in order that she might be presented to her, she had recourse to the same lady whom her husband had so dearly loved.

And while they were waiting in a church for the appointed hour, she began bewailing and praising her husband, saying among other things to the lady—

"Alas, madam! my misfortune is the greatest that ever befell a woman, for just when he was loving me more than he had ever done, God took him from me."

So saying, and with many tears, she showed the ring which she wore on her finger as a token of her husband's perfect love, whereat the other lady, finding that her deception had resulted in such a happy issue, was, despite her sorrow for the Captain's death, so moved to laughter, that she would not present the widow to the Regent, but committed her to the charge of another lady, and withdrew into a side chapel, where she satisfied her inclination to laugh.

"I think, ladies, that those who receive such gifts ought to seek to use them to as good a purpose as did this worthy lady. They would find that benefactions bring joy to those who bestow them. And we must not charge this lady with deceit, but esteem

her good sense which turned to good that which in itself was worthless."

"Do you mean to say," said Nomerfide, "that a fine diamond, costing two hundred crowns, is worthless? I can assure you that if it had fallen into my hands, neither his wife nor his relations would have seen aught of it. Nothing is more wholly one's own than a gift. The gentleman was dead, no one knew anything about the matter, and she might well have spared the poor old woman so much sorrow."

"By my word," said Hircan, "you are right. There are women who, to make themselves appear of better heart than others, do things that are clearly contrary to their notions, for we all know that women are the most avaricious of beings, yet their vanity often surpasses their avarice, and constrains their hearts to actions that they would rather not perform. My belief is that the lady who gave the diamond away in this fashion was unworthy to wear it."

"Softly, softly," said Oisille; "I believe I know who she is, and I therefore beg that you will not condemn her unheard."

"Madam," said Hircan, "I do not condemn her at all; but if the gentleman was as virtuous as you say, it were an honour to have such a lover, and to wear his ring; but perhaps some one less worthy of being loved than he held her so fast by the finger that the ring could not be put on."

"Truly," said Ennasuite, "she might well have kept it, seeing that no one knew anything about it."

"What!" said Geburon; "are all things lawful to those who love, provided no one knows anything about them?"

"By my word," said Saffredent, "the only misdeed that I have ever seen punished is foolishness. There is never a murderer, robber, or adulterer condemned by the courts or blamed by his fellows, if only he be as cunning as he is wicked. Oft-time, however, a bad man's wickedness so blinds him that he becomes a fool; and thus, as I have just said, it is the foolish only that are punished, not the vicious."

"You may say what you please," said Oisille, "only God can judge the lady's heart; but for my part, I think that her action was a very honourable and virtuous one.[7] However, to put an end to the debate, I pray you, Parlamente, to give some one your vote."

"I give it willingly," she said, "to Simontault, for after two such mournful tales we must have one that will not make us weep."

"I thank you," said Simontault. "In giving me your vote you have all but told me that I am a jester. It is a name that is extremely distasteful to me, and

[7] In our opinion this sentence disposes of Miss Mary Robinson's supposition (*The Fortunate Lovers*, London, 1887, p. 159) that Oisille (*i.e.*, Louise of Savoy) is the real heroine of this tale. Queen Margaret would hardly have represented her commending her own action. If any one of the narrators of the *Heptameron* be the heroine of the story, the presumptions are in favour of Longarine (La Dame de Lonray), Margaret's bosom friend, whose silence during the after-converse is significant.—ED.

in revenge I will show you that there are women who with certain persons, or for a certain time, make a great pretence of being chaste, but the end shows them in their real colours, as you will see by this true story."

TALE XIV.

The Lord of Bonnivet, desiring to revenge himself upon a Milanese lady for her cruelty, made the acquaintance of an Italian gentleman whom she loved, but to whom she had never granted anything save fair words and assurances of affection. To accomplish his purpose he gave this gentleman such good advice that the lady granted him what he had so long sought, and this the gentleman made known to Bonnivet, who, having cut both hair and beard, and dressed himself in clothes like those of the other, went at midnight and put his vengeance into execution. Then the lady, having learnt from him the plan that he had devised to win her, promised to desist from loving those of her own nation, and to hold fast to him.

AT the time when the Grand-Master of Chaumont was Governor of the Duchy of Milan,[1] there

[1] M. de Lincy is of opinion that the incidents recorded in this story took place between 1501 and 1503; but according to M. Lacroix, the Grand-Master of Chaumont did not become Governor of the Milanese till 1506. This personage, to whom Queen Margaret frequently alludes in her tales, was Charles d'Amboise,

lived there a gentleman called the Lord of Bonnivet, who by reason of his merits was afterwards made Admiral of France. Being greatly liked by the Grand-Master and every one else on account of the qualities he possessed, he was a welcome guest at the banquets where the ladies of Milan assembled, and was regarded by them with more favour than ever fell to a Frenchman's lot, either before or since; and this as much on account of his handsome countenance, grace of manner, and pleasant converse, as by reason of the renown

nephew of the famous Cardinal d'Amboise, minister to Louis XII. In turn admiral and marshal, Governor of Paris, and Grand-Master, in France, of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, he figured prominently in the Italian wars of the time, and notably at the battle of Aignadel. In 1510 he commanded the troops which fought on behalf of the Duke of Ferrara against the Emperor and Pope Julius II., and the latter having excommunicated him for bearing arms against the Holy See, his mind is said to have become unhinged. He died at Correggio in February 1511, when only thirty-eight years of age, some biographers asserting that he was poisoned, whilst others contend that he fell from a bridge during a military expedition. Whilst on his death-bed, he sent messengers to the Pope, begging that the decree of excommunication against him might be annulled, but before the Papal absolution arrived he had expired. The name of Chaumont, by which he is generally known, is that of an estate he possessed, between Blois and Amboise, on the Loire. The reputation he enjoyed of being one of the handsomest men of his time was well deserved, if one may judge by a painting at the Louvre which is said to be his portrait. This picture, long ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci, and supposed to represent Charles VIII. of France, has been identified as the work of Andreas Solario, who executed numerous paintings for Cardinal d'Amboise at the famous château of Gaillon.—L. M. and ED.

which he had gained among all as being one of the most skilful and valorous soldiers of his time.[2]

One day during the carnival, when he was among the maskers, he danced with one of the most beautiful and bravely attired ladies to be found in the whole city; and whenever a pause occurred in the music of the hautboys, he did not fail to address her with love speeches, in which he excelled all others. But she[3] having no

[2] Some particulars concerning William Gouffier, Lord of Bonnivet, have been given in vol. i. (Tale IV. n. 3). It may here be mentioned that the domain whence he derived the name by which he is generally known was in the neighbourhood of Poitiers, around the village of Vendeuvre, where he built himself a vast château, destroyed at the close of the eighteenth century. Some fragments of the sculptured work adorning it, remarkable for their elegance of design and delicacy of workmanship, are in the Poitiers Museum. It is not unlikely that the incidents related in Tale IV. occurred at this château; or else at that of Oiron, another domain of the Gouffiers, between Loudun and Bressuire. In the chapel of Oiron were buried Bonnivet, his mother, his brother Artus, and his nephew Claud. Their tombs, large marble mausoleums of Italian workmanship, surmounted by recumbent statues, were opened and mutilated by the Huguenots in 1568, when the bones they contained were scattered to the winds. Bonnivet's statue is probably the most damaged of the four. The château of Oiron, with its marble staircases, quaint frescoes, sculptured medallions, &c., testifies to the great wealth possessed by the Gouffier family, and justifies the cynical motto assumed by Bonnivet's nephew: "Others have beaten the bushes, but we have the birds."—ED.

[3] This lady may perhaps be the "Sennora Clerice" (Clarissa) of whom Brantôme writes as follows in his *Capitaines François*:—"It was Bonnivet alone who advised King Francis to cross the

favourable reply to give him, suddenly checked his discourse by assuring him that she neither loved nor ever would love any man but her husband, and that he must by no means expect that she would listen to him. The gentleman, however, would not take this answer for a refusal, and continued to press his suit with great energy until mid-Lent. But he found her still firm in her declaration that she would love neither himself nor another, which he could not believe, however, seeing how ill-favoured was her husband, and how great her own beauty. Convinced that she was practising dissimulation, he resolved, on his own side, to have recourse to deception, and accordingly he ceased to urge his suit, and inquired so closely concerning her manner of life that he discovered she was in love with a most discreet and honourable Italian gentleman.

Little by little the Lord of Bonnivet insinuated himself into the friendship of this gentleman,

mountains and follow M. de Bourbon, and in this he had less his master's advantage and service at heart than his desire to return and see a great and most beautiful lady of Milan, whom he had made his mistress some years previously. . . . It is said that this was the 'Sennora Clerice,' then accounted one of the most beautiful ladies of Italy. . . . A great lady of the time, from whom I heard this story, told me that he, Bonnivet, had commended this lady Clerice to the King so highly as to make him desirous of seeing and winning her; and this was the principal cause of this expedition of the King's."—Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, vol. ii. p. 167-8.—L.

and did so with so much discretion and skill, that the other remained ignorant of his motive, and became so much attached to him that, after the lady of his heart, there was no one in the world whom he loved more. In order that he might pluck his secret from his breast, the Lord of Bonnivet pretended to tell him his own, declaring that he loved a certain lady to whom he had in truth never given a thought, and begging that he would keep the matter secret, and that they might have but one heart and one mind together. Wishing to show in return a like affection, the poor Italian gentleman thereupon proceeded to disclose at length the love that he bore the lady on whom Bonnivet wished to be revenged; and after this they would meet somewhere once every day in order to recount the favours that had befallen them during the past four and twenty hours; with this difference, however, that one lied, and the other spoke the truth. And the Italian confessed that he had loved this lady for three years, but had never obtained anything of her save fair words and the assurance of her love.

Bonnivet then gave him all the advice that he could to enable him to attain his end, and to such good purpose that in a few days the lady consented to grant all that was sought of her. It only remained to devise a plan for their

meeting, and through the counsels of Bonnivet this was soon accomplished. And so one day before supper the Italian said to him—

"I am more beholden to you, sir, than to any other man living, for, thanks to your good advice, I expect to obtain to-night that which I have coveted so many years."

"I pray you, my friend," thereupon said Bonnivet, "tell me the manner of your undertaking, so that if there be any risk in it, or craft required, I may serve you in all friendship."

The Italian gentleman then began to tell him that the lady had devised a means of having the principal door of the house left open that night, availing herself as a pretext of the illness of one of her brothers for whose requirements it was necessary to send into the town at all hours. He might enter the courtyard, but he was to be careful not to go up by the principal staircase. Instead of this he was to take a small flight on his right hand, and enter the first gallery he came to, into which the rooms of the lady's father-in-law and brothers-in-law opened; and he was to choose the third door from the head of the stairs, and if on trying it gently he found that it was locked, he was to go away again, for in that case he might be sure that her husband had returned, though not expected back for two

days. If, however, he found that the door was open, he was to enter softly, and boldly bolt it behind him, for in that case there would be none but herself in the room. And above all, he was to get himself felt shoes, in order that he might make no noise, and he was to be careful not to come earlier than two hours after midnight, for her brothers-in-law, who were fond of play, never went to bed until after one of the clock.

"Go, my friend," replied Bonnivet, "and may God be with you and preserve you from mischief. If my company can be of any service to you, I am wholly at your disposal."

The Italian gentleman thanked him warmly, but said that in an affair of this nature he could not be too much alone; and thereupon he went away to set about his preparations.

Bonnivet, on his part, did not go to sleep, for he saw that the time had come for revenging himself upon his cruel love. Going home betimes, he had his beard trimmed to the same length and breadth as the Italian's, and also had his hair cut, so that, on touching him, no difference between himself and his rival might be perceived. Nor did he forget the felt shoes, nor garments such as the Italian was wont to wear. Being greatly liked by the lady's father-in-law, he was not afraid to go to the house at an early hour, for he made

up his mind that if he were perceived, he would go straight to the chamber of the old gentleman, with whom he had some business on hand.

About midnight he entered the lady's house, and although there were a good many persons going to and fro, he passed them unnoticed and thus reached the gallery. Trying the first two doors, he found them shut; the third, however, was not, and he softly pushed it open. And having thus entered the lady's room, he immediately bolted the door behind him. He found that the whole chamber was hung with white linen, the floor and ceiling also being covered with the same; and there was a bed draped with cloth so fine and soft and so handsomely embroidered in white, that nothing better were possible. And in the bed lay the lady alone, wearing her cap and night-gown, and covered with pearls and gems. This, before he was himself perceived by her, he was able to see by peeping round the curtain; for there was a large wax candle burning, which made the room as bright as day. And fearful lest he should be recognised by her, he first of all put out the light. Then he undressed himself and got into bed beside her.

The lady, taking him to be the Italian who had so long loved her, gave him the best possible reception; but he, not forgetting that he was

there in another's stead, was careful not to say a single word. His only thought was to execute his vengeance at the cost of her honour and chastity without being beholden to her for any boon. And although this was contrary to her intention, the lady was so well pleased with this vengeance that she deemed him rewarded for all she thought he had endured. At last it struck one of the clock, and it was time to say good-bye. Then, in the lowest tones he could employ, he asked her if she were as well pleased with him as he was with her. She, believing him to be her lover, said that she was not merely pleased but amazed at the greatness of his love, which had kept him an hour without answering her.

Then he began to laugh aloud, and said to her—

"Now, madam, will you refuse me another time, as you have hitherto been wont to do?"

The lady, recognising him by his speech and laughter, was in such despair with grief and shame, that she called him villain, traitor, and deceiver a thousand times over, and tried to throw herself out of bed to search for a knife in order to kill herself, since she was so unfortunate as to have lost her honour through a man whom she did not love, and who to be revenged on her might publish the matter to the whole world.

But he held her fast in his arms, and in fair

soft words declared that he would love her more than her lover, and would so carefully conceal all that affected her honour that she should never be brought to reproach. This the poor foolish thing believed, and on hearing from him the plan that he had devised and the pains that he had taken to win her, she swore to him that she would love him better than the other, who had not been able to keep her secret. She now knew, said she, how false was the repute in which the French were held; they were more sensible, persevering, and discreet than the Italians; wherefore she would henceforward lay aside the erroneous opinions of her nation and hold fast to him. But she earnestly entreated him not to show himself for some time at any entertainment or in any place where she might be unless he were masked; for she was sure she should feel so much ashamed that her countenance would betray her to every one.

This he promised to do, and he then begged that she would give her lover a good welcome when he came at two o'clock, getting rid of him afterwards by degrees. This she was very loth to do, and but for the love she bore to Bonnivet would on no account have consented. However, when bidding her farewell, he gave her so much cause for satisfaction that she would fain have had him stay with her some time longer.

Having risen and donned his garments again, he departed, leaving the door of the room slightly open, as he had found it. And as it was now nearly two o'clock, and he was afraid of meeting the Italian gentleman, he withdrew to the top of the staircase, whence he not long afterwards saw the other pass by and enter the lady's room.

For his own part, he then betook himself home to rest, in such wise that at nine of the clock on the following morning he was still in bed. While he was rising, there arrived the Italian gentleman, who did not fail to recount his fortune, which had not been so great as he had hoped; for on entering the lady's chamber, said he, he had found her out of bed, wearing her dressing-gown, and in a high fever, with her pulse beating quick and her countenance aflame, and a perspiration beginning to break out upon her. She had therefore begged him to go away forthwith, for fearing a mishap, she had not ventured to summon her women, and was in consequence so ill that she had more need to think of death than of love, and to be told of God than of Cupid. She was distressed, she added, that he should have run such risk for her sake, since she was wholly unable to grant what he sought in a world she was so soon to leave. He had felt so astonished and unhappy on hearing this that all his fire and

joy had been changed to ice and sadness, and he had immediately gone away. However, he had sent at daybreak to inquire about her, and had heard that she was indeed very ill. While recounting his griefs he wept so piteously that it seemed as though his soul must melt away in his tears.

Bonnivet, who was as much inclined to laugh as the other was to weep, comforted him as well as he could, telling him that affections of long duration always had a difficult beginning, and that Love was causing him this delay only that he might afterwards have the greater joy. And so the two gentlemen parted. The lady remained in bed for some days, and on regaining her health dismissed her first suitor, alleging as her reason the fear of death that had beset her and the prickings of her conscience. But she held fast to my lord Bonnivet, whose love, as is usual, lasted no longer than the field flowers bloom.

"I think, ladies, that the gentleman's craftiness was a match for the hypocrisy of the lady, who, after playing the prude so long, showed herself such a wanton in the end."

"You may say what you please about women," said Ennasuite, "but the gentleman played an evil trick. Is it allowable that if a lady loves one man, another may obtain her by craft?"

"You may be sure," said Geburon, "that when such mares are for sale they are of necessity carried off by the last and highest bidder. Do not imagine that wooers take such great pains for the ladies' sakes. It is for their own sakes and their own pleasure."

"By my word," said Longarine, "I believe you; for, truth to tell, all the lovers that I have ever had have always begun their speeches by talking about me, declaring that they cherished my life, welfare, and honour; but in the end they only thought of themselves, caring for nought but their own pleasure and vanity. The best plan, therefore, is to dismiss them as soon as the first portion of their discourse is ended; for when they come to the second, there is not so much credit in refusing them, seeing that vice when recognised must needs be rejected."

"So as soon as a man opens his mouth," said Ennasuite, "we ought to refuse him, without knowing what he is going to say?"

"Nay," replied Parlamente, "my friend does not mean that. We know that at first a woman should never appear to understand what the man desires, or even to believe him when he has declared what it is; but when he comes to strong protestations, I think it were better for ladies to leave him on the road rather than continue to the end of the journey with him."

"That may be," said Nomerfide; "but are we to believe that they love us for evil? Is it not a sin to judge our neighbours?"

"You may believe what you please," said Oisille; "but there is so much cause for fearing it to be true, that as soon as you perceive the faintest spark, you should flee from this fire, lest it should burn up your heart before you even know it."

"Truly," said Hircan, "the laws you lay down are over harsh. If women, whom gentleness beseems so well, were minded to prove as rigorous as you would have them be, we men, on our part, would exchange our gentle entreaties for craft and force."

"In my opinion," said Simontault, "the best advice is that each should follow his natural bent. Whether he love or not, let him do so without dissimulation."

"Would to God," said Saffredent, "that such a rule would bring as much honour as it would give pleasure."

Dagoucin, however, could not refrain from saying—

"Those who would rather die than make their desire known could not comply with your law."

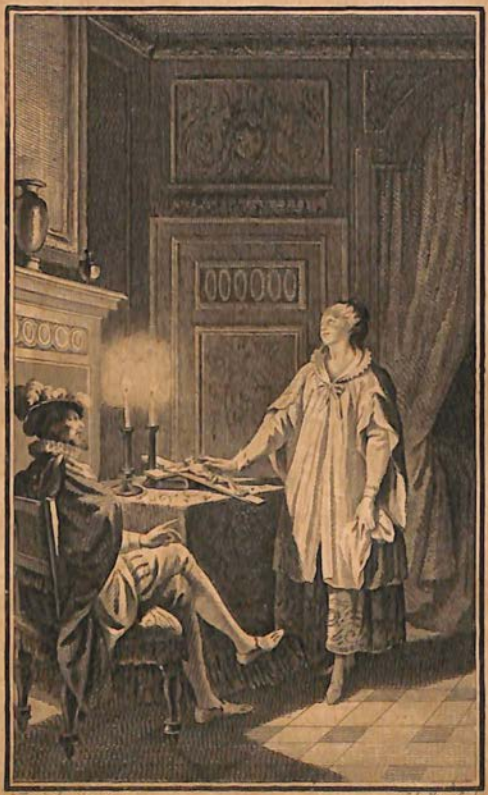
"Die!" thereupon said Hircan; "the good knight has yet to be born that would die for the publishing of such a matter. But let us cease talking of what is impossible, and see to whom Simontault will give his vote."

"I give it," said Simontault, "to Longarine, for I observed her just now talking to herself. I imagine that she was recalling some excellent matter, and she is not wont to conceal the truth, whether it be against man or woman."

"Since you deem me so truthful," replied Longarine,

"I will tell you a tale which, though it be not so much to the praise of women as I could wish it to be, will yet show you that there are some possessed of as much spirit, wit, and craft as men. If my tale be somewhat long, you will bear with it in patience."

2



TALE XV.

Through the favour of King Francis, a simple gentleman of the Court married a very rich woman, of whom, however, as much by reason of her extreme youth as of the bestowal of his own heart elsewhere, he made but little account; whereat, after trying every plan to please him, she was so moved with resentment and overcome by despair, that she resolved to console herself with another for the indignities which she endured from her husband.[1]

AT the Court of King Francis the First there was a gentleman whose name I know right well, but will not mention. He was poor, having less than five hundred livres a year, but he was so well liked by the King for his many qualities that he at last married a lady of such wealth that a great lord would have been pleased to take

[1] The incidents referred to in this story must have occurred between 1515 and 1543, during the reign of Francis I.—L.

her. As she was still very young, he begged one of the greatest ladies of the Court to receive her into her household, and this the lady very willingly did.

Now this gentleman was so courteous, so handsome, and so full of grace that he was held in great regard by all the ladies of the Court, and among the rest by one whom the King loved, and who was neither so young nor so handsome as his own wife. And by reason of the great love that the gentleman bore this lady, he made such little account of his wife, that he slept scarcely one night in the year with her, and, what she found still harder to endure, he never spoke to her or showed her any sign of love. And although he enjoyed her fortune, he allowed her so small a share in it, that she was not dressed as was fitting for one of her station, or as she herself desired. The lady with whom she abode would often reproach the gentleman for this, saying to him—

"Your wife is handsome, rich, and of a good family, yet you make no more account of her than if she were the opposite. In her extreme youth and childishness she has hitherto submitted to your neglect; but I fear me that when she finds herself grown-up and handsome, her mirror and some one that loves you not will so set before her eyes that beauty by which you set so little

store, that resentment will lead her to do what she durst not think of had you treated her well."

The gentleman, however, having bestowed his heart elsewhere, made light of what the lady said, and notwithstanding her admonitions, continued to lead the same life as before.

But when two or three years had gone by, his wife became one of the most beautiful women ever seen in France, so that she was reputed to have no equal at the Court. And the more she felt herself worthy of being loved, the more distressed she was to find that her husband paid no attention to her; and so great became her affliction that, but for the consolations of her mistress, she had well-nigh been in despair. After trying every possible means to please her husband, she reflected that his inclinations must needs be directed elsewhere, for otherwise he could not but respond to the deep love that she bore him. Thereupon she made such skilful inquiries that she discovered the truth, namely, that he was every night so fully occupied in another quarter that he could give no thought to his wife or to his conscience.

Having thus obtained certain knowledge of the manner of life he led, she fell into such deep melancholy, that she would not dress herself otherwise than in black or attend any place of

entertainment. Her mistress, who perceived this, did all that in her lay to draw her from such a mood, but could not. And although her husband was made acquainted with her state, he showed himself more inclined to make light of it than to relieve it.

You are aware, ladies, that just as extreme joy will give occasion to tears, so extreme grief finds an outlet in some joy. In this wise it happened that a great lord who was near akin to the lady's mistress, and who often visited her, hearing one day of the strange fashion in which she was treated by her husband, pitied her so deeply that he desired to try to console her; and on speaking to her, found her so handsome, so sensible, and so virtuous, that he became far more desirous of winning her favour than of talking to her about her husband, unless it were to show her what little cause she had to love him.

The lady, finding that, though forsaken by the man who ought to have loved her, she was on the other hand loved and sought after by so handsome a Prince, deemed herself very fortunate in having thus won his favour. And although she still desired to preserve her honour, she took great pleasure in talking to him and in reflecting that she was loved and prized, for these were two things for which, so to speak, she hungered.

This friendship continued for some time, until it came to the knowledge of the King, who had so much regard for the lady's husband that he was unwilling he should be put to any shame or vexation. He therefore earnestly begged the Prince to forego his inclinations, threatening him with his displeasure should he continue to press his suit.

The Prince, who set the favour of the King above all the ladies in the world, promised for his sake to lay aside the enterprise, and to go that very evening and bid the lady farewell. This he did as soon as he knew that she had retired to her own apartments, over which was the room of the gentleman, her husband. And the husband being that evening at his window, saw the Prince going into his wife's room beneath. The Prince saw him also, but went in for all that, and in bidding farewell to her whose love was but beginning, pleaded as his sole reason the King's command.

After many tears and lamentations and regrets, which lasted until an hour after midnight, the lady finally said—

"I praise God, my lord, that it pleases Him you should lose your love for me, since it is so slight and weak that you are able to take it up and lay it down at the command of man. For

my own part, I have never asked mistress or husband or even myself for permission to love you; Love, aided by your good looks and courtesy, gained such dominion over me that I could recognise no God or King save him. But since your heart is not so full of true love that fear may not find room in it, you can be no perfect lover, and I will love none that is imperfect so perfectly as I had resolved to love you. Farewell, then, my lord, seeing that you are too timorous to deserve a love as frank as mine."

The Prince went away in tears, and looking back he again noticed the husband, who was still at the window, and had thus seen him go in and come out again. Accordingly he told him on the morrow why he had gone to see his wife, and of the command that the King had laid upon him, whereat the gentleman was well pleased, and gave thanks to the King.

However, finding that his wife was becoming more beautiful every day, whilst he himself was growing old and less handsome than before, he began to change his tactics, and to play the part which he had for a long time imposed upon his wife, bestowing some attention upon her and seeking her more frequently than had been his wont. But the more she was sought by him the more was he shunned by her; for she desired

to pay him back some part of the grief that he had caused her by his indifference.

Moreover, being unwilling to forego so soon the pleasure that love was beginning to afford her, she addressed herself to a young gentleman, who was so very handsome, well-spoken, and graceful that he was loved by all the ladies of the Court. And by complaining to him of the manner in which she had been treated, she lured him to take pity upon her, so that he left nothing untried in his attempts to comfort her. She, on her part, to console herself for the loss of the Prince who had forsaken her, set herself to love this gentleman so heartily that she came to forget her former grief, and to think of nothing but the skilful conduct of her new amour, in which she succeeded so well that her mistress perceived nought of it, for she was careful not to speak to her lover in her mistress's presence. When she wished to talk with him she would betake herself to the rooms of some ladies who lived at the Court, amongst whom was one that her husband made a show of being in love with.

Now one dark evening she stole away after supper, without taking any companion with her, and repaired to the apartment belonging to these ladies, where she found the man whom she loved better than herself. She sat down beside him,

and leaning upon a table they conversed together while pretending to read in the same book. Some one whom her husband had set to watch then went and reported to him whither his wife was gone. Being a prudent man, he said nothing, but as quickly as possible betook himself to the room, where he found his wife reading the book. Pretending, however, not to see her, he went straight to speak to the other ladies, who were in another part of the room. But when his poor wife found herself discovered by him in the company of a gentleman to whom she had never spoken in his presence, she was in such confusion that she quite lost her wits; and being unable to pass along the bench, she leaped upon the table and fled as though her husband were pursuing her with a drawn sword. And then she went in search of her mistress, who was just about to withdraw to her own apartments.

When her mistress was undressed, and she herself had retired, one of her women brought her word that her husband was inquiring for her. She answered plainly that she would not go, for he was so harsh and strange that she dreaded lest he should do her some harm.

At last, however, for fear of worse, she consented to go. Her husband said not a word to her until they were in bed together, when being

unable to dissemble so well as he, she began to weep. And when he asked her the cause of this, she told him that she was afraid lest he should be angry at having found her reading in company with a gentleman.

He then replied that he had never forbidden her to speak to a man, and did not take it ill that she had done so; but he did indeed take it ill that she had run from him as though she had done something deserving of censure, and her flight and nothing else had led him to think that she was in love with the gentleman. He therefore commanded her never to speak to him again in public or in private, and assured her that the first time she did so he would slay her without mercy or compassion. She very readily promised to obey, and made up her mind not to be so foolish another time.

But things are desired all the more for being forbidden, and it was not long before the poor woman had forgotten her husband's threats and her own promises. That very same evening she sent to the gentleman, begging him to visit her at night. But the husband, who was so tormented by jealousy that he could not sleep, and who had heard say that the gentleman visited his wife at night, wrapped himself in a cloak, and taking a valet with him, went to his wife's apart-

ment and knocked at the door. She, not in the least expecting him, got up alone, put on furred slippers and a dressing-gown which were lying close at hand, and finding that the three or four women whom she had with her were asleep, went forth from her room and straight to the door at which she had heard the knocking. On her asking, "Who is there?" she received in answer the name of her lover; but to be still more certain, she opened a little wicket, saying—

"If you be the man you say you are, show me your hand, and I shall recognise it."

And when she touched her husband's hand she knew who it was, and quickly shutting the wicket, cried out—

"Ha, sir! it is your hand."

The husband replied in great wrath—

"Yes; it is the hand that will keep faith with you. Do not fail, therefore, to come when I send for you."

With these words he went away to his own apartment, whilst she, more dead than alive, went back into her room, and cried out aloud to her servant-women, "Get up, my friends; you have slept only too well for me, for thinking to trick you, I have myself been tricked."

With these words she swooned away in the middle of the room. The women rose at her cry,

and were so astonished at seeing their mistress stretched upon the floor, as well as at hearing the words she had uttered, that they were at their wits' end, and sought in haste for remedies to restore her. When she was able to speak, she said to them—

"You see before you, my friends, the most unhappy creature in the world."

And thereupon she went on to tell them the whole adventure, and begged of them to help her, for she counted her life as good as lost.

While they were seeking to comfort her, a valet came with orders that she was to repair to her husband instantly. Thereupon, clinging to two of her women, she began to weep and wail, begging them not to suffer her to go, for she was sure she would be killed. But the valet assured her to the contrary, offering to pledge his life that she should receive no hurt. Seeing that she lacked all means of resistance, she at last threw herself into the servant's arms, and said to him—

"Since it may not be otherwise, you must e'en carry this hapless body to its death."

Half fainting in her distress, she was then at once borne by the valet to his master's apartment. When she reached it, she fell at her husband's feet, and said to him—

"I beseech you, sir, have pity on me, and I swear to you by the faith I owe to God that I will tell you the whole truth."

"'Fore God you shall," he replied, like one beside himself, and forthwith he drove all the servants from the room.

Having always found his wife very devout, he felt sure that she would not dare to forswear herself on the Holy Cross. He therefore sent for a very beautiful crucifix that belonged to him, and when they were alone together, he made her swear upon it that she would return true replies to his questions. Already, however, she had recovered from her first dread of death, and taking courage, she resolved that if she was to die she would make no concealment of the truth, but at the same time would say nothing that might injure the gentleman she loved. Accordingly, having heard all the questions that her husband had to put to her, she replied as follows—

"I have no desire, sir, either to justify myself or to lessen to you the love that I have borne to the gentleman you suspect; for if I did, you could not and you should not believe me. Nevertheless, I desire to tell you the cause of this affection. Know, then, sir, that never did wife love husband more than I loved you, and that from the time I wedded you until I reached

my present age, no other passion ever found its way into my heart. You will remember that while I was still a child, my parents wished to marry me to one richer and more highly born than yourself, but they could never gain my consent to this from the moment I had once spoken to you. In spite of all their objections I held fast to you, and gave as little heed to your poverty as to their remonstrances. You cannot but know what treatment I have had at your hands hitherto, and the fashion in which you have loved and honoured me; and this has caused me so much grief and discontent that but for the succour of the lady with whom you placed me, I should have been in despair. But at last, finding myself fully grown and deemed beautiful by all but you, I began to feel the wrong you did me so keenly that the love I had for you changed into hate, and the desire of obeying you into one for revenge. In this despairing condition I was found by a Prince who, being more anxious to obey the King than Love, forsook me just as I was beginning to feel my pangs assuaged by an honourable affection. When the Prince had left me, I lighted upon this present gentleman; and he had no need to entreat me, for his good looks, nobleness, grace, and virtue are well worthy of being sought after and courted by all women of

sound understanding. At my instance, not at his own, he has loved me in all virtue, so that never has he sought from me aught that honour might refuse. And although I have but little cause to love you, and so might be absolved from being loyal and true to you, my love of God and of my honour has hitherto sufficed to keep me from doing aught that would call for confession or shame. I will not deny that I went into a closet as often as I could to speak with him, under pretence of going thither to say my prayers, for I have never trusted the conduct of this matter to any one, whether man or woman. Further, I will not deny that when in so secret a place and safe from all suspicion I have kissed him with more goodwill than I kiss you. But as I look to God for mercy, no other familiarity has passed between us; he has never urged me to it, nor has my heart ever desired it; for I was so glad at seeing him that methought the world contained no greater pleasure.

"And now, sir, will you, who are the sole cause of my misfortune, take vengeance for conduct of which you have yourself long since set me an example, with, indeed, this difference, that in your case you thought nought of either honour or conscience; for you know and I know too that the woman you love does not rest content

with what God and reason enjoin. And albeit the law of man deals great dishonour to wives who love other men than their husbands, the law of God does not exempt from punishment the husbands who love other women than their wives. And if my offences are to be weighed against yours, you are more to blame than I, for you are a wise and experienced man, and of an age to know and to shun evil, whilst I am young and have no experience of the might and power of love. You have a wife who desires you, honours you, and loves you more than her own life; while I have a husband who avoids me, hates me, and rates me as lightly as he would a servant maid. You are in love with a woman who is already old, of meagre figure, and less fair than I; whilst I love a gentleman younger, handsomer, and more amiable than you. You love the wife of one of the best friends you have in the world, the mistress, moreover, of your King and master, so that you offend against the friendship that is due to the first, and the respect that is due to the second; whereas I am in love with a gentleman whose only tie is his love for me. Judge then fairly which of us two is the more worthy of punishment or pardon: you, a man of wisdom and experience, who through no provocation on my part have acted thus ill not only towards me,

but towards the King, to whom you are so greatly indebted; or I, who am young and ignorant, who am slighted and despised by you, and loved by the handsomest and most worshipful gentleman in France, a gentleman whom I have loved in despair of ever being loved by you."

When the husband heard her utter these truths with so fair a countenance, and with such a bold and graceful assurance as clearly testified that she neither dreaded nor deserved any punishment, he was overcome with astonishment, and could find nothing to reply except that a man's honour and a woman's were not the same thing. However, since she swore to him that there had been nothing between herself and her lover but what she had told him, he was not minded to treat her ill, provided she would act so no more, and that they both put away the memory of the past. To this she agreed, and they went to bed in harmony together.

Next morning an old damosel who was in great fear for her mistress's life came to her at her rising, and asked—

"Well, madam, and how do you fare?"

"I would have you know," said her mistress, laughing, "that there is not a better husband than mine, for he believed me on my oath."

And so five or six days passed by.

Meanwhile the husband had such care of his wife that he caused a watch to be kept on her both night and day. But for all his care he could not prevent her from again speaking with her lover in a dark and suspicious place. However, she contrived matters with such secrecy that no one, whether man or woman, could ever learn the truth, though a rumour was started by some serving-man about a gentleman and a lady whom he had found in a stable underneath the rooms belonging to the mistress of the lady in question. At this her husband's suspicions were so great that he resolved to slay the gentleman, and gathered together a large number of his relations and friends to kill him if he was anywhere to be found. But the chief among his kinsmen was so great a friend of the gentleman whom they sought, that instead of surprising him he gave him warning of all that was being contrived against him, for which reason the other, being greatly liked by the whole Court, was always so well attended that he had no fear of his enemy's power, and could not be taken unawares and attacked.

However, he betook himself to a church to meet his lady's mistress, who had heard nothing of all that had passed, for the lovers had never spoken together in her presence. But the gentle-

man now informed her of the suspicion and ill-will borne him by the lady's husband, and told her that although he was guiltless he had nevertheless resolved to go on a long journey in order to check the rumours, which were beginning greatly to increase. The Princess, his lady's mistress, was much astonished on hearing this tale, and protested that the husband was much in the wrong to suspect so virtuous a wife, and one in whom she had ever found all worth and honour. Nevertheless, considering the husband's authority, and in order to quell these evil reports, she advised him to absent himself for a time, assuring him that for her part she would never believe such foolish suspicions.

Both the gentleman and the lady, who was present, were well pleased at thus preserving the favour and good opinion of the Princess, who further advised the gentleman to speak with the husband before his departure. He did as he was counselled, and meeting with the husband in a gallery close to the King's apartment, he assumed a bold countenance, and said to him with all the respect due to one of high rank—

"All my life, sir, I have desired to do you service, and my only reward is to hear that last evening you lay in wait to kill me. I pray you, sir, reflect that while you have more

authority and power than I have, I am nevertheless a gentleman even as you are. It would be grievous to me to lose my life for naught. I pray you also reflect that you have a wife of great virtue, and if any man pretend the contrary I will tell him that he has foully lied. For my part, I can think of nothing that I have done to cause you to wish me ill. If, therefore, it please you, I will remain your faithful servant; if not, I am that of the King, and with that I may well be content."

The husband replied that he had in truth somewhat suspected him, but he deemed him so gallant a man that he would rather have his friendship than his enmity; and bidding him farewell, cap in hand, he embraced him like a dear friend. You may imagine what was said by those who, the evening before, had been charged to kill the gentleman, when they beheld such tokens of respect and friendship. And many and diverse were the remarks that each one made.

In this manner the gentleman departed, and as he had far less money than good looks, his mistress delivered to him a ring that her husband had given her of the value of three thousand crowns; and this he pledged for fifteen hundred.

Some time after he was gone, the husband

came to the Princess, his wife's mistress, and prayed her to grant his wife leave to go and dwell for a while with one of his sisters. This the Princess thought very strange, and so begged him to tell her the reasons of his request, that he told her part of them, but not all. When the young lady had taken leave of her mistress and of the whole Court without shedding any tears or showing the least sign of grief, she departed on her journey to the place whither her husband desired her to go, travelling under the care of a gentleman who had been charged to guard her closely, and above all not to suffer her to speak on the road to her suspected lover.

She knew of these instructions, and every day was wont to cause false alarms, scoffing at her custodians and their lack of care. Thus one day, on leaving her lodging, she fell in with a Grey Friar on horseback, with whom, being herself on her palfrey, she talked on the road the whole time from the dinner to the supper hour. And when she was a quarter of a league from the place where she was to lodge that night, she said to him—

"Here, father, are two crowns which I give you for the consolation you have afforded me this afternoon. They are wrapped in paper, for I well know that you would not venture to touch

them.[2] And I beg you to leave the road as soon as you have parted from me, and to take care that you are not seen by those who are with me. I say this for your own welfare, and because I feel myself beholden to you."

The friar, well pleased with the two crowns, set off across the fields at full gallop; and when he was some distance away the lady said aloud to her attendants—

"You may well deem yourselves good servants and diligent guards. He as to whom you were to be so careful has been speaking to me the whole day, and you have suffered him to do so. Your good master, who puts so much trust in you, should give you the stick rather than give you wages."

When the gentleman who had charge of her heard these words he was so angry that he could not reply, but calling two others to him, set spurs to his horse, and rode so hard that he at last reached the friar, who on perceiving his pursuers had fled as fast as he could. However, the poor fellow was caught, being less well mounted than

[2] The Grey Friars belonging to a mendicant order were prohibited from demanding or accepting money; it was only allowable for them to receive gifts in kind, mainly edible produce. It was for this reason that the lady gave the friar the two crowns wrapped in paper, knowing that he ought not to touch the coins.—M. See also vol. i. p. 98, note 3.

they were. He was quite ignorant of what it all meant, and cried them mercy, taking off his hood in order that he might entreat them with bareheaded humility. Thereupon they realised that he was not the man whom they sought, and that their mistress had been mocking them. And this she did with even better effect upon their return to her.

"You are fitting fellows," said she, "to receive ladies in your charge. You suffer them to talk to any stranger, and then, believing whatever they may say, you go and insult the ministers of God."

After all these jests they arrived at the place that her husband had commanded, and here her two sisters-in-law, with the husband of one of them, kept her in great subjection.

In the meanwhile her husband had heard how his ring had been pledged for fifteen hundred crowns, whereat he was exceedingly wrathful, and in order to save his wife's honour and to get back the ring, he bade his sisters tell her to redeem it, he himself paying the fifteen hundred crowns.

She cared nought for the ring since her lover had the money, but she wrote to him saying that she was compelled by her husband to redeem it, and in order that he might not suppose she was

doing this through any lessening of her affection, she sent him a diamond which her mistress had given her, and which she liked better than any ring she had.

Thereupon the gentleman forwarded her the merchant's bond right willingly; deeming himself fortunate in having fifteen hundred crowns and a diamond,[3] and at being still assured of his lady's favour. However, as long as the husband lived, he had no means of communing with her save by writing.

When the husband died, expecting to find her still what she had promised him to be, he came in all haste to ask her in marriage; but he found that his long absence had gained him a rival who was loved better than himself. His sorrow at this was so great that he henceforth shunned the companionship of ladies and sought out scenes of danger, and so at last died in as high repute as any young man could have.[4]

[3] The gentleman deemed it only natural that the woman he honoured with his love should present him with money. In the seventeenth century similar opinions were held, if one may judge by some passages in Dancourt's comedies, and by the presents which the Duchess of Cleveland made to Henry Jermyn and John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, as chronicled in the *Memoirs of the Count de Gramont.*—M.

[4] Brantôme tells a somewhat similar tale to this in his *Vies des Dames Galantes* (Dis. I.): "I knew," he writes, "two ladies of the Court, sisters-in-law to one another, one of whom was married to a courtier, high in favour and very skilful, but who did not make

"In this tale, ladies, I have tried, without sparing our own sex, to show husbands that wives of spirit yield rather to vengeful wrath than to the sweetness of love. The lady of whom I have told you withstood the latter for a great while, but in the end succumbed to despair. Nevertheless, no woman of virtue should yield as she did, for, happen what may, no excuse can be found for doing wrong. The greater the temptations, the more virtuous should one show oneself, by resisting and overcoming evil with good, instead of returning evil for evil; and this all the more because the evil we think to do to another often recoils upon ourselves. Happy are those women who display the heavenly virtues of chastity, gentleness, meekness, and long-suffering."

"It seems to me, Longarine," said Hircan, "that the lady of whom you have spoken was impelled by resentment rather than by love; for had she loved the gentleman as greatly as she appeared to do, she

as much account of his wife as by reason of her birth he should have done, for he spoke to her in public as he might have spoken to a savage, and treated her most harshly. She patiently endured this for some time, until indeed her husband lost some of his credit, when, watching for and taking the opportunity, she quickly repaid him for all the disdain that he had shown her. And her sister-in-law imitated her and did likewise; for having been married when of a young and tender age, her husband made no more account of her than if she had been a little girl. . . . But she, advancing in years, feeling her heart beat and becoming conscious of her beauty, paid him back in the same coin, and made him a present of a fine pair of horns, by way of interest for the past."—Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, vol. ix. p. 157.—L.

would not have forsaken him for another. She may therefore be called resentful, vindictive, obstinate, and fickle."

"It is all very well for you to talk in that way," said Ennasuite, "but you do not know the heart-break of loving without return."

"It is true," said Hircan, "that I have had but little experience in that way. If I am shown the slightest disfavour, I forthwith forego lady and love together."

"That," said Parlamente, "is well enough for you who love only your own pleasure; but a virtuous wife cannot thus forsake her husband."

"Yet," returned Simontault, "the lady in the story forgot for a while that she was a woman. No man could have taken a more signal revenge."

"It does not follow," said Oisille, "because one woman lacks discretion that all the rest are the same."

"Nevertheless," said Saffredent, "you are all women, as any one would find who looked carefully, despite all the fine clothes you may wear."

"If we were to listen to you," said Nomerfide, "we should spend the day in disputes. For my part, I am so impatient to hear another tale, that I beg Longarine to give some one her vote."

Longarine looked at Geburon and said:—

"If you know anything about a virtuous woman, I pray you set it forth."

"Since I am to do what I can," said Geburon, "I will tell you a tale of something that happened in the city of Milan."

TALE XVI.

A lady of Milan, widow of an Italian Count, had resolved never again to marry or to love. But for three years she was so earnestly wooed by a French gentleman, that after repeated proof of the steadfastness of his love, she granted him what he had so greatly desired, and they vowed to each other everlasting affection.[1]

IN the days of the Grand Master of Chaumont,[2] there lived a lady who was reckoned one of the most honourable women that there were at that time in the city of Milan. She had married an Italian Count, and being left a widow, lived in the house of her brothers-in-law, refusing to

[1] According to M. de Lincy, who points out that Bonnivet must be the hero of the adventure here related, the incidents referred to would have occurred at Milan between 1501 and 1503; but in M. Lacroix's opinion they would be posterior to 1506.—ED.

[2] See *ante*, note 1 to Tale XIV.

hear speak of another marriage. And so discreetly and piously did she demean herself that there was none in the Duchy, whether French or Italian, but held her in high esteem.

One day when her brothers and sisters-in-law offered an entertainment to the Grand Master of Chaumont, this widow lady was obliged to be present, though she made it her rule not to attend such gatherings when held in other places. And when the Frenchmen saw her, they were all admiration for her beauty and grace, especially one among them whose name I shall not mention; for it will suffice for you to know that there was no Frenchman in Italy more worthy of love than he, for he was endowed with all the beauties and graces that a gentleman could have. And though he saw that the lady wore black crape, and remained with several old women in a corner apart from the young ones, yet, having never known what it was to fear either man or woman, he set himself to converse with her, taking off his mask, and leaving the dance in order to remain in her company.

Throughout the whole of the evening he did not cease talking to her and to the old women, and found more pleasure in doing so than if he had been with the most youthful and bravely attired ladies of the Court. So much, indeed, was this

the case, that when the hour came to withdraw he seemed to have not yet had time even to sit down. And although he only spoke to the lady on such common matters as were suited to such company, she knew very well that he desired to win her favour, and this she resolved to guard against by all means in her power, so that he was never afterwards able to see her at any banquet or assembly.

He inquired about the manner of her life, and found that she often went to churches and convents; whereupon he kept such good watch that she could never visit them so secretly but he was there before her. And he would remain in the church as long as he had the happiness to see her, and all the time that she was present would gaze at her so affectionately that she could not remain in ignorance of the love he bore her. In order to avoid him, she resolved to feign illness for a time, and to hear mass in her own house; and at this the gentleman was most sorely grieved, for he had no other means of seeing her than at church.

Thinking that she had cured him of his habit, she at last returned to the churches as before, but love quickly brought tidings of this to the French gentleman, who then renewed his habits of devotion. He feared, however, that she might

again throw some hindrance in his way, and that he might not have time to tell her what he would; and so one morning, when she thought herself well concealed in a chapel, he placed himself at the end of the altar at which she was hearing mass; and seeing that she was but scantily attended, he turned towards her just as the priest was elevating the host, and in a soft and loving voice said to her—

"May I be sent to perdition, madam, by Him whom the priest has now in his hands, if you are not causing my death. Though you take from me all means of speaking with you, you cannot be ignorant of my desire; my wearied eyes and my deathly face must make the truth apparent to you."[3]

The lady pretended not to understand him, and replied—

"God's name should not thus be taken in vain; but the poets say that the gods laugh at the oaths and lies of lovers, and so women who regard

[3] The Queen of Navarre is known to have had a considerable knowledge of the Italian language, and it is therefore quite possible that she was acquainted with the story of Poliphilus and Polia, which, although no French translation of it appeared until 1554, had been issued at Venice as early as 1499. In any case, however, there is a curious similarity between the speech of the French gentleman given above and the discourse which Poliphilus addresses to Polia when he finds her saying her prayers in the temple. A considerable portion of the Italian story is in keeping with the character of the *Heptameron* tales.—M.

their honour should not show themselves credulous or compassionate."

With these words she rose up and returned home.

The gentleman's anger at these words may well be imagined by such as have experienced the like fortune. But having no lack of spirit, he held it better to have received this unfavourable reply than so have failed in declaring his love, to which he held fast during three years, losing neither time nor opportunity in wooing her by letters and in other ways.

For three years, however, she vouchsafed him no reply, but shunned him as the wolf shuns the hound that is to take him; and this she did through fear for her honour and fair fame, and not because she hated him. He perceived this so clearly that he pursued her more eagerly than ever; and at last, after many refusals, troubles, tortures and despairs, the lady took pity upon him for the greatness and steadfastness of his love, and so granted him what he had so greatly desired and so long awaited.

When they had agreed concerning the means to be employed, the French gentleman failed not to repair to her house, although in doing so he placed his life in great danger, seeing that she and her relations lived all together.

However, being as skilful as he was handsome, he contrived the matter so prudently that he was able to enter the lady's room at the hour which she had appointed, and found her there all alone, lying in a beautiful bed; but as he was hasting to put off his clothes in order to join her, he heard a great whispering at the door, and a noise of swords scraping against the wall.

Then the widow said to him, with the face of one nigh to death—

"Now is your life and my honour in as great danger as well can be, for I hear my brothers outside seeking you to slay you. I pray you, therefore, hide yourself under this bed, and when they fail to find you I shall have reason to be angry with them for alarming me without just cause."

The gentleman, who had never yet known fear, replied—

"And what, pray, are your brothers that they should frighten a man of mettle? If the whole breed of them were there together, I am sure they would not tarry for the fourth thrust of my sword. Do you, therefore, rest quietly in bed, and leave the guarding of this door to me."

Then he wrapped his cloak about his arm, took his drawn sword in his hand, and opened

the door so that he might have a closer view of the swords that he had heard. When the door was opened, he saw two serving-women, who, holding a sword in each hand, had raised this alarm.

"Sir," they said to him, "forgive us. We were commanded by our mistress to act in this manner, but you shall be hindered by us no more."

Seeing that they were women, the gentleman could do no more than bid them go to the devil, and shut the door in their faces. Then he got into bed to the lady with all imaginable speed, his passion for her being in no wise diminished by fear; and forgetting to inquire the reason of this skirmish, he thought only of satisfying his desire.

But when daybreak was drawing nigh, he begged his mistress to tell him why she had treated him so ill, both in making him wait so long, and in having played this last trick upon him.

"My intention," she answered, laughing, "had been never to love again, and I had observed it from the time I became a widow; but, after you had spoken to me at the entertainment, your worth led me to change my resolve, and to love you as much as you loved me. It is true that

honour, which had ever guided me, would not suffer me to be led by love to do aught to the disparagement of my reputation. But as the poor hind when wounded unto death thinks by change of place to change the pain it carries with it, so did I go from church to church thinking to flee from him whom I carried in my heart, and the proof of whose perfect devotion has reconciled honour and love. However, that I might be the more certain that I was giving my heart and love to a true man, I desired to make this last proof by means of my serving-women. And I vow to you that had I found you so timorous as to hide beneath my bed, either for fear of your life or for any other reason, I was resolved to rise and go into another room and never see you more. But since I have found that you are possessed of more beauty, and grace, and virtue, and valour than rumour had given you, and that fear has no power over your heart, nor can cool one whit the love you bear me, I am resolved to cleave to you for the remainder of my days. I feel sure that I could not place life and honour in better hands than those of one whom I deem unmatched in every virtue."

And, just as though the human will could be unchangeable, they vowed and promised what was not in their power, namely, perpetual affec-

tion. For this is a thing that can neither spring up nor abide in the heart of man, as only those ladies know who have had experience of how long such feelings last.[4]

"So, ladies, if you are wise, you will beware of us even as the stag, had he understanding, would beware of the hunter; for our glory, happiness, and delight is to see you captured in order to rob you of that which is more precious to you than life."

"Why, Geburon," said Hircan, "since when have you turned preacher? I can remember a time when you did not talk after that fashion."

"It is quite true," said Geburon, "that I have just spoken contrary to what I have always said my life long; but since my teeth are no longer able to chew venison, I warn the hapless deer to beware of the hunters, in order that I may atone in my old age for all the mischief which I sought to do in my youth."

"We thank you, Geburon," said Nomerfide, "for warning us to our profit, but for all that we do not feel very greatly beholden to you. You never spoke in that way to one you truly loved, and this is a proof that you have little love for us, and, moreover, would not have us loved. Nevertheless, we hold ourselves

[4] In Boaistuau's edition of the *Heptameron* the final part of the above sentence is given as follows: "And those women that have had experience of it know this, and also how long such fancies last." An extract from Brantôme in connection with the story will be found in the Appendix to this volume, D.

as discreet and as virtuous as the ladies whom you so long pursued in your youth. But old folk are commonly vain enough to think that they have been wiser in their time than those who come after them."

"Well, Nomerfide," said Geburon, "will you believe that I have told you the truth when the faithlessness of one of your lovers has made you acquainted with the evil nature of men?"

"It seems to me," said Oisille to Geburon, "that the gentleman whom you praise so highly for his boldness ought rather to be praised for the ardour of his love. So strong is this passion, that it impels the most cowardly to embark on enterprises about which the bravest would think twice."

"If, madam," said Saffredent, "he had not deemed the Italians to be better at talking than acting, methinks he had reason to be afraid."

"Yes," said Oisille, "if he had not had in his heart the fire that consumes fear."

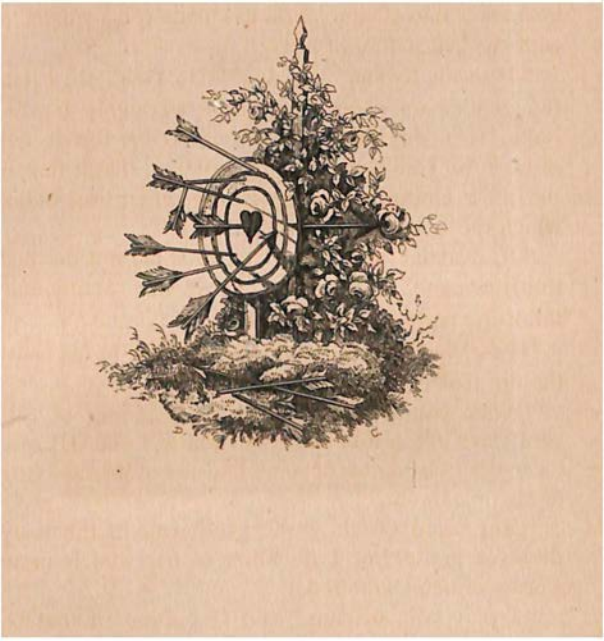
"Since you do not deem the boldness of this gentleman altogether worthy of praise," said Hircan, "you doubtless know of some one else more deserving of commendation."

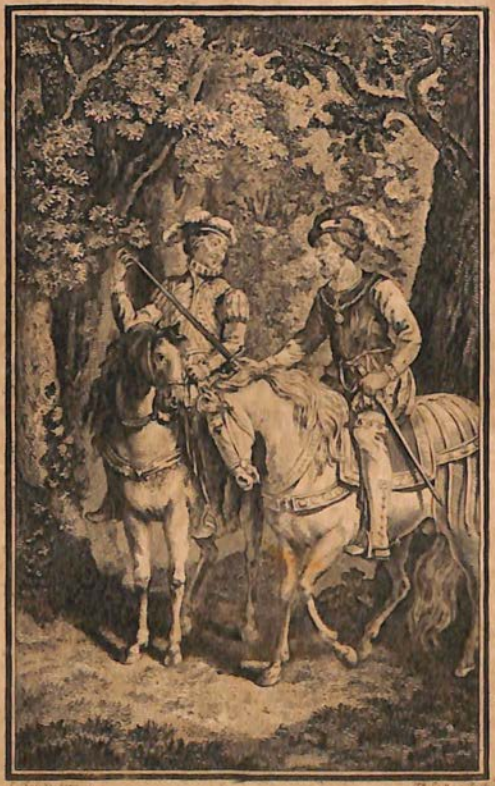
"Nay," said Oisille, "the gentleman in the story deserves praise, but I do know of one who is more worthy of being admired."

"I pray you, madam," said Geburon, "if that be so, take my place and tell us the tale."

"If," began Oisille, "a man who showed such boldness against the Milanese to save his own life and

his mistress's honour is to be esteemed so very brave, what shall be said of one who, without any need for it, and from pure and simple valour, performed the deed of which I will now tell you?"





TALE XVII.

King Francis, being urged to banish Count William, who was said to have received money to bring about his death, did not suffer it to appear that he had any inkling of the scheme, but played the Count so shrewd a trick that he himself took leave of the King and went into banishment.[1]

To the town of Dijon, in the Duchy of Burgundy, there came a German Count to take service with King Francis. He was named William,[2] and was of the House of Saxony, which is so closely allied with that of Savoy that formerly they were but one. This Count, who was held for as handsome

[1] The incidents of this story are historical. Francis I. is known to have sojourned at Dijon in June and July 1521.—L.

[2] This is William, eldest son of Wolfgang von Furstemberg, chamberlain to Maximilian I., and privy counsellor to Philip of Austria.—B. J. Various particulars concerning him are given in the Appendix to this volume, E.

and valiant a gentleman as Germany ever knew, was right well received by the King, who not only took him into his service, but kept him close to himself as a groom of the chamber.

Now the Lord de la Trémoille,[3] Governor of Burgundy, an old knight and a loyal servant to the King, was ever jealous and anxious for his master's safety, and was wont to have spies at all

[3] This is Louis II., Sire de la Trémoille, Viscount of Thouars and Prince of Talmont, born in 1460. The son of Louis I. de la Trémoille and of Margaret d'Amboise, he became one of the most remarkable men of his time. Favoured by Anne de Beaujeu, who arranged his marriage with Gabrielle de Bourbon, he commanded the royal troops at the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, in Brittany (1488), at which the rebellious Duke of Orleans (afterwards Louis XII.) and the Prince of Orange, with a large number of the nobles, their partisans, were made prisoners. They were all invited to La Trémoille's table after the engagement, and, according to Godefroi's Latin history of Louis XII., at the close of the repast two Franciscan monks entered the hall, whereupon La Trémoille rose and said: "Princes, I refer your judgments to the King, but as for you, Knights, who have broken your faith and falsified your knightly oath, you shall pay for your crime with your heads. If you have any remorse on your consciences, here are monks who will shrive you." The hall resounded with lamentations, but the unhappy nobles were promptly dragged into the courtyard, and there put to death; both Orleans and Orange being too terror-stricken to intercede for them. When the former came to the throne, he forgave La Trémoille for his conduct in this affair, and showed him great favour, appointing him Governor of Burgundy in 1501. La Trémoille also became Admiral of Guienne and Brittany, and figured conspicuously in the various Italian campaigns of the period. He was killed at Pavia in 1525. Jean Bouchet, a contemporary, wrote a curious life of this remarkable man, entitled *Panegyric du Chevalier sans reproche.* It will be found in Michaud and Poujoulat's *Collection de Mémoires.*— L. and Ed.

points to learn what the King's enemies were doing; and so prudently did he contrive matters, that but few things were hidden from him. Among his informations there came to him one day a letter from a friend, telling him that Count William had received a sum of money, with promise of more, for putting the King to death in any such manner as he might find possible.[4]

The Lord de la Trémoille failed not to give speedy notice of the affair to the King, and further made it known to the King's mother, Louise of Savoy, who, forgetting that she and this German were akin, begged the King to banish him forthwith. But the King bade her speak no more of it, saying that it was impossible so upright and honourable a gentleman would undertake so vile a deed.

Some time afterwards a second warning arrived in confirmation of the first, and the Governor, burning with love for his master, sought permission either to banish the Count or else take him in hand in some other fashion; but the King charged him expressly to keep the affair secret, being persuaded that he might discover the truth by some other means.

One day when going a-hunting, the King, as

[4] It has been suggested that the instigator of this plot was Charles V.'s famous minister, Cardinal Granvelle.—ED.

his sole weapon, buckled on the finest sword it were possible to see, and took Count William along with him, desiring that he would follow him close. After hunting the stag for some time, seeing that all his people save the Count were far off, he turned out of all the roads and tracks, till he found himself alone with the Count in the deepest part of the forest,[5] when, drawing his sword, he said:—

"Think you that this sword be handsome and trusty?"

The Count took it by the point, and answered that he had never seen one that he liked better.

"You are right," said the King; "and I think that, if a gentleman had resolved to slay me, he would think twice before he attacked me if he knew the strength of my arm, the stoutness of my heart, and the excellence of this sword. Yet, for all that, I should count him but a craven scoundrel if, when we were face to face and alone, he durst not execute what he had dared to undertake."

"Sire," replied Count William, with astonished countenance, "the wickedness of the undertaking would be very great, but the folly of seeking to execute it would be no less."

The King laughed, sheathed his sword again,

[5] This may be either the forest of Argilly or that of Mondragon, both in the vicinity of Dijon.—ED.

and hearing the hunt hard by, spurred after it with all speed. When he reached his train he spoke to none of what had passed, but he felt convinced that, although Count William was as brave and ready a gentleman as might be, he was not the man to carry out so high an enterprise.

However, Count William, fearing that he had been discovered or was at least suspected, repaired the next morning to Robertet, Secretary for the King's Finances,[6] and told him that he

[6] This is Florimond Robertet, the first of that family of statesmen who served the French crown from Charles VIII. to Henri III. It was Charles VIII. who appointed Florimond Treasurer of France and Secretary of Finances, offices in which he displayed great skill and honesty. Louis XII., who confirmed him in his functions, habitually consulted him on important political affairs. He acquired considerable wealth, and was often called "the great baron," after the barony of Alluye, which he possessed in Le Perche. One of the curiosities of Blois is the Hôtel d'Alluye, a house of semi-Moorish style, erected by Robertet at the close of the fifteenth century. Another of his residences was the château of Bury, near Blois, where he set up Michael Angelo's famous bronze statue of David, presented to him by the city of Florence, and the fate of which has furnished material for so much speculation. Under Francis I. Robertet enjoyed the same credit as during the two previous reigns. Fleuranges declares that no one else was so intimate with the King, and commends him as being the most experienced and competent statesman of the times. According to the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, Robertet died "at the Palais (de Justice) in Paris, of which he was concierge," on November 29, 1527. Francis repeatedly visited him during his illness, and, on his death, ordered that his remains should lie in state, and be interred with great pomp and ceremony. Clement Marot's works contain a poem, four hundred lines in length, celebrating Robertet's virtues and talents.—L., B. J., and ED.

had considered the privileges and pay offered him to continue in the King's service, and that they would not suffice to support him for half the year. Unless therefore it pleased the King to give him double, he would be forced to depart; and he accordingly begged the said Robertet to acquaint him as soon as might be with the will of the King. To this the Secretary replied that he could not better advance the business than by going to the King straightway; and he undertook the mission right willingly, for he had seen the warnings that the Governor had received.

As soon, therefore, as the King was awake he failed not to lay the matter before him in the presence of the Lord de la Trémoille and the Admiral de Bonnivet, who were ignorant of the trick that the King had played the Count the day before.

Then the King laughed, and said to them—

"You desired to banish Count William, and you see he is banishing himself. Wherefore, tell him that if he be not content with the establishment which he accepted on entering my service, and which many men of good families have deemed themselves fortunate to have, he must e'en seek a better fortune elsewhere. For my part, I will in no wise hinder him, but shall be

well pleased if he can find some condition wherein to live according to his deserts."

Robertet was as prompt to bear this answer to the Count as he had been to prefer his request to the King. The Count replied that with the King's permission he was resolved to depart, and, like one whom fear urges to flight, he did not tarry even four and twenty hours; but, just as the King was sitting down to table, came to take leave of him, feigning much sorrow that his need should force him from the Royal presence.

He also went to take leave of the King's mother, who parted from him no less joyfully than she had formerly received him as a kinsman and friend. And thus he returned to his own country; and the King, seeing his mother and courtiers in amazement at his sudden departure, told them of the fright he had given him, saying that, even if the Count were innocent of that which was laid against him, his fear had been sufficiently great to constrain him to leave a master whose temper he had not yet come to know.

"For my part, ladies, I can see no reason why the King should have been moved to risk himself thus against so famous a captain, except that, forsaking the company and places where Kings find no inferiors ready to give them battle, he desired to place himself

on an equal footing with one whom he suspected to be his enemy; and this that he might have the satisfaction of testing the stoutness and valour of his own heart."

"Without a doubt," said Parlamente, "he was in the right; for all the praise of man cannot so well satisfy a noble heart as its own particular knowledge and experience of the virtues that God has placed in it."

"The ancients," said Geburon, "long ago showed us that to reach the Temple of Fame it was necessary to pass through the Temple of Virtue, and I, who am acquainted with the two persons in your tale, know right well that the King is indeed one of the most valiant men in his kingdom."

"By my word," said Hircan, "at the time when Count William came to France, I should have feared his [the King's] sword more than those of the four most accomplished Italian gentlemen at Court."

"We well know," said Ennasuite, "that he is too famous for our praises to equal his merit, and that the day would be spent before we each could say all the good we think of him. And so, madam, I pray you, give your vote to one who will tell us some further good of men, if such there be."

Then said Oisille to Hircan—

"It seems to me that, as you are so wont to speak ill of women, you will find it easy to tell us some good story in praise of a man. I therefore give you my vote."

"That can I easily do," said Hircan, "for but a little while since I was told a story in praise of a gentleman whose love, constancy and patience are so meritorious that I must not suffer them to be forgotten."

TALE XVIII.

A young student of noble birth, being smitten with love for a very beautiful lady, subdued both love and himself in order to achieve his end, and this in spite of many such temptations as might have sufficed to make him break his promise. And so all his woes were turned to joy by a reward suitable to his constant, patient, loyal and perfect love.[1]

IN one of the goodly towns of the kingdom of France there dwelt a nobleman of good birth, who attended the schools that he might learn how virtue and honour are to be acquired among virtuous men. But although he was so accomplished that at the age of seventeen or eighteen years he was, as it were, both precept and

[1] This story seems to be based on fact, being corroborated in its main lines by Brantôme, but there is nothing in the narrative to admit of the personages referred to being identified.—ED.

example to others, Love failed not to add his lesson to the rest; and, that he might be the better hearkened to and received, concealed himself in the face and the eyes of the fairest lady in the whole country round, who had come to the city in order to advance a suit-at-law. But before Love sought to vanquish the gentleman by means of this lady's beauty, he had first won her heart by letting her see the perfections of this young lord; for in good looks, grace, sense and excellence of speech he was surpassed by none.

You, who know what speedy way is made by the fire of love when once it fastens on the heart and fancy, will readily imagine that between two subjects so perfect as these it knew little pause until it had them at its will, and had so filled them with its clear light, that thought, wish and speech were all aflame with it. Youth, begetting fear in the young lord, led him to urge his suit with all the gentleness imaginable; but she, being conquered by love, had no need of force to win her. Nevertheless, shame, which tarries with ladies as long as it can, for some time restrained her from declaring her mind. But at last the heart's fortress, which is honour's abode, was shattered in such sort that the poor lady consented to that which she had never been minded to refuse.

In order, however, to make trial of her lover's patience, constancy and love, she only granted him what he sought on a very hard condition, assuring him that if he fulfilled it she would love him perfectly for ever; whereas, if he failed in it, he would certainly never win her as long as he lived. And the condition was this:—she would be willing to talk with him, both being in bed together, clad in their linen only, but he was to ask nothing more from her than words and kisses.

He, thinking there was no joy to be compared to that which she promised him, agreed to the proposal, and that evening the promise was kept; in such wise that, despite all the caresses she bestowed on him and the temptations that beset him, he would not break his oath. And albeit his torment seemed to him no less than that of Purgatory, yet was his love so great and his hope so strong, sure as he felt of the ceaseless continuance of the love he had thus painfully won, that he preserved his patience and rose from beside her without having done anything contrary to her expressed wish.[2]

[2] Brantôme's *Dames Galantes* contains an anecdote which is very similar in character to this tale: "I have heard speak," he writes, "of a very beautiful and honourable lady, who gave her lover an assignation to sleep with her, on the condition that he should not touch her . . . and he actually obeyed her, remaining

The lady was, I think, more astonished than pleased by such virtue; and giving no heed to the honour, patience and faithfulness her lover had shown in the keeping of his oath, she forthwith suspected that his love was not so great as she had thought, or else that he had found her less pleasing than he had expected.

She therefore resolved, before keeping her promise, to make a further trial of the love he bore her; and to this end she begged him to talk to a girl in her service, who was younger than herself and very beautiful, bidding him make love speeches to her, so that those who saw him come so often to the house might think that it was for the sake of this damsel and not of herself.

The young lord, feeling sure that his own love was returned in equal measure, was wholly obedient to her commands, and for love of her compelled himself to make love to the girl; and she, finding him so handsome and well-spoken, believed his lies more than other truth, and loved

in a state of ecstasy, temptation and continence the whole night long; whereat she was so well pleased with him that some time afterwards she consented to become his mistress, giving as her reason that she had wished to prove his love by his obedience to her injunctions; and on this account she afterwards loved him the more, for she felt sure that he was capable of even a greater feat than this, though it were a very great one."—Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, vol. ix. pp. 6, 7.—L.

him as much as though she herself were greatly loved by him.

The mistress finding that matters were thus well advanced, albeit the young lord did not cease to claim her promise, granted him permission to come and see her at one hour after midnight, saying that after having so fully tested the love and obedience he had shown towards her, it was but just that he should be rewarded for his long patience. Of the lover's joy on hearing this you need have no doubt, and he failed not to arrive at the appointed time.

But the lady, still wishing to try the strength of his love, had said to her beautiful damsel—

"I am well aware of the love a certain nobleman bears to you, and I think you are no less in love with him; and I feel so much pity for you both, that I have resolved to afford you time and place that you may converse together at your ease."

The damsel was so enchanted that she could not conceal her longings, but answered that she would not fail to be present.

In obedience, therefore, to her mistress's counsel and command, she undressed herself and lay down on a handsome bed, in a room the door of which the lady left half-open, whilst within she set a light so that the maiden's beauty might be clearly

seen. Then she herself pretended to go away, but hid herself near to the bed so carefully that she could not be seen.

Her poor lover, thinking to find her according to her promise, failed not to enter the room as softly as he could, at the appointed hour; and after he had shut the door and put off his garments and fur shoes, he got into the bed, where he looked to find what he desired. But no sooner did he put out his arms to embrace her whom he believed to be his mistress, than the poor girl, believing him entirely her own, had her arms round his neck, speaking to him the while in such loving words and with so beautiful a countenance, that there is not a hermit so holy but he would have forgotten his beads for love of her.

But when the gentleman recognised her with both eye and ear, and found he was not with her for whose sake he had so greatly suffered, the love that had made him get so quickly into the bed, made him rise from it still more quickly. And in anger equally with mistress and damsel, he said—

"Neither your folly nor the malice of her who put you there can make me other than I am. But do you try to be an honest woman, for you shall never lose that good name through me."

So saying he rushed out of the room in the greatest wrath imaginable, and it was long before

he returned to see his mistress. However love, which is never without hope, assured him that the greater and more manifest his constancy was proved to be by all these trials, the longer and more delightful would be his bliss.

The lady, who had seen and heard all that passed, was so delighted and amazed at beholding the depth and constancy of his love, that she was impatient to see him again in order to ask his forgiveness for the sorrow that she had caused him to endure. And as soon as she could meet with him, she failed not to address him in such excellent and pleasant words, that he not only forgot all his troubles but even deemed them very fortunate, seeing that their issue was to the glory of his constancy and the perfect assurance of his love, the fruit of which he enjoyed from that time forth as fully as he could desire, without either hindrance or vexation.[3]

[3] In reference to this story, Montaigne says in his Essay on Cruelty: "Such as have sensuality to encounter, willingly make use of this argument, that when it is at the height it subjects us to that degree that a man's reason can have no access . . . wherein they conceive that the pleasure doth so transport us that our reason cannot perform its office whilst we are so benumbed and extacied in delight. . . . But I know that a man may triumph over the utmost effort of this pleasure: I have experienced it in myself, and have not found Venus so imperious a goddess as many—and some more reformed than I—declare. I do not consider it as a miracle, as the Queen of Navarre does in one of the Tales of her *Heptameron* (which is a marvellous pretty book of the kind), nor for a thing of

"I pray you, ladies, find me if you can a woman who has ever shown herself as constant, patient and true as was this man. They who have experienced the like temptations deem those in the pictures of Saint Antony very small in comparison; for one who can remain chaste and patient in spite of beauty, love, opportunity and leisure, will have virtue enough to vanquish every devil."

"'Tis a pity," said Oisille, "that he did not address his love to a woman possessing as much virtue as he possessed himself. Their amour would then have been the most perfect and honourable that was ever heard of."

"But prithee tell me," said Geburon, "which of the two trials do you deem the harder?"

"I think the last," said Parlamente, "for resentment is the strongest of all temptations."

Longarine said she thought that the first was the most arduous to sustain, since to keep his promise it was needful he should subdue both love and himself.

"It is all very well for you to talk," said Simontault, "it is for us who know the truth of the matter to say what we think of it. For my own part, I think he was stupid the first time and witless the second;

extreme difficulty to pass over whole nights, where a man has all the convenience and liberty he can desire, with a long-coveted mistress, and yet be just to his faith first given to satisfy himself with kisses and innocent embraces only, without pressing any further."—Cotton's *Montaigne's Essays*, London, 1743, vol. ii. pp. 109–10.

for I make no doubt that, while he was keeping his promise to his mistress, she was put to as much trouble as himself, if not more. She had him take the oath only in order to make herself out a more virtuous woman than she really was; she must have well known that strong love will not be bound by commandment or oath, or aught else on earth, and she simply sought to give a show of virtue to her vice, as though she could be won only through heroic virtues. And the second time he was witless to leave a woman who loved him, and who was worth more than his pledged mistress, especially when his displeasure at the trick played upon him had been a sound excuse."

Here Dagoucin put in that he was of the contrary opinion, and held that the gentleman had on the first occasion shown himself constant, patient and true, and on the second occasion loyal and perfect in his love.

"And how can we tell," asked Saffredent, "that he was not one of those that a certain chapter calls *de frigidis et malificiatis*?[4] To complete his eulogy,

[4] This is an allusion to the penalties pronounced by several ecclesiastical Councils, and specified in the Capitularies, against those who endeavoured to suspend the procreative faculties of their enemies by resorting to magic. On this matter Baluze's collection of Capitularies (vol. i.) may be consulted. The "chapter" referred to by Margaret is evidently chapter xv. (book vi.) of the Decretals of Pope Boniface VIII., which bears the title of *De frigidis et maleficiatis*, and which is alluded to by Rabelais in *Pantagruel*. The belief in the practices in question dates back to ancient times, and was shared by Plato and Pliny, the latter of whom says that to guard against any spell of the kind some wolf fat should be

Hircan ought to have told us how he comported himself when he obtained what he wanted, and then we should have been able to judge whether it was virtue or impotence that made him observe so much discretion."

"You may be sure," said Hircan, "that had he told me this I should have concealed it as little as I did the rest. Nevertheless, from seeing his person and knowing his temper, I shall ever hold that his conduct was due to the power of love rather than to any impotence or coldness."

"Well, if he was such as you say," said Simontault, "he ought to have broken his oath; for, had the lady been angered by such a trifle, it would have been easy to appease her."

"Nay," said Ennasuite, "perhaps she would not then have consented."

"And pray," said Saffredent, "would it not have been easy enough to compel her, since she had herself given him the opportunity?"

"By Our Lady!" said Nomerfide, "how you run on! Is that the way to win the favour of a lady who is accounted virtuous and discreet?"

rubbed upon the threshold and door jambs of one's bed-chamber. In the sixteenth century sorcery of this description was so generally believed in, in some parts of France, that Cardinal du Perron inserted special prayers against it in the ritual. Some particulars on the subject will be found in the *Admirables Secrets du Petit Albert*, and also in a *Traité d'Enchantement*, published at La Rochelle in 1591, which gives details concerning certain practices alleged to take place on the solemnisation of marriage among those of the Reformed Church.—D. and L.

"In my opinion," said Saffredent, "the highest honour that can be paid to a woman from whom such things are desired is to take her by force, for there is not the pettiest damsel among them but seeks to be long entreated. Some indeed there are who must receive many gifts before they are won, whilst there are others so stupid that hardly any device or craft can enable one to win them, and with these one must needs be ever thinking of some means or other. But when you have to do with a woman who is too clever to be deceived, and too virtuous to be gained by words or gifts, is there not good reason to employ any means whatever that may be at your disposal to vanquish her? When you hear it said that a man has taken a woman by force, you may be sure that the woman has left him hopeless of any other means succeeding, and you should not think any the worse of a man who has risked his life in order to give scope to his love."

Geburon burst out laughing.

"In my day," said he, "I have seen besieged places stormed because it was impossible to bring the garrison to a parley either by money or by threats; 'tis said that a place which begins to treat is half taken."

"You may think," said Ennasuite, "that every love on earth is based upon such follies as these, but there are those who have loved, and who have long persevered in their love, with very different aims."

"If you know a story of that kind," said Hircan, "I will give place to you for the telling of it."

"I do know one," said Ennasuite, "and I will very willingly relate it."

APPENDIX.

A.

(TALE VIII., Page 1.)

TALES of a similar character to this will be found in the following works written prior to Margaret's time :—

Legrand d'Aussy's collection of *Fabliaux ou Contes du XII^ème et XIII^ème siècles* (vol. iii.).

Boccaccio's *Decameron* (day viii., story iv.).

Enguerrand d'Oisy's *Le Meunier d'Aleu.*

Poggio's *Facetiæ* (*Vir sibi cornua promovens*).

Sacchetti's *Novelle* (vol. ii., No. ccvi.).

Morlini's *Novelle* (No. lxxix.).

Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles (story ix.).

Malespini's *Ducento Novelle* (part ii., No. xcvi.).

Of the foregoing, says M. de Montaiglon, Margaret could only have been acquainted with the *Decameron*, the *Cent Nouvelles*, and Poggio's *Facetiæ*, which had been translated into French by Tardix (see Nos. cv. and cx. of that translation).

A similar story in Latin verse is also contained in a fourteenth century MS. at Monte Cassino. See *I codici e le arti a Monte Cassino*, by D. Andrea Caravita (vol. ii. p. 289).

Since Margaret's time stories of the same character have appeared in the following works :—

Melander's *Jocondia* (p. 298).

Phil. Béroalde's *Contes Latins* (see *Poggii Imitationes*, Noël's ed., vol. ii. p. 245).

Guicciardini's *Hore di Recreazione* (p. 103).
J. Bouchet's *Serées* (No. 8; Roybet's ed., vol. ii. p. 115).
Gabrielle Chapuys' *Facétieuses Journées* (p. 213).
La Fontaine's *Contes* (book v., No. viii.: *Les Quiproquo*).
Le Passe-Temps Agréable (p. 27).

Moreover, a song written on the same subject will be found, says M. de Lincy, on folio 44 of the *Premier Recueil de toutes les chansons nouvelles* (Troyes, Nicholas du Ruau, 1590). It is there called "The facetious and recreative story of a certain labourer of a village near Paris, who, thinking that he was enjoying his servant, lay with his wife." This song was reprinted in various other collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

B.

(TALE XI. (B.), Page 95.)

AN anecdote in keeping with this story will be found in Brantôme's miscellaneous works (Petitot's ed., vol. viii. pp. 382-4). The author of *Les Dames Galantes*, after alluding to his aunt Louise de Bourdeille—who was brought up at Court by Anne of Brittany—proceeds to say:—

"A certain Grey Friar, who habitually preached before the Queen, fell so deeply in love with Mademoiselle de Bourdeille that he completely lost his wits, and sometimes in his sermons, whilst speaking of the beauty of the holy virgins of past times, he would so forget himself as to say some words respecting the beauty of my said aunt, not to mention the soft glances which he cast at her. And sometimes, whilst in the Queen's room, he would take great pleasure in discoursing to her, not with words of love however, for he would have incurred a whipping, but with other covert words which tended towards love. My aunt

in no wise approved of his discourses, and made some mention of them to her own and her companions' governess. The Queen heard of the matter and could not believe it, on account of this man's cloth and holiness. For this reason she kept silent until a certain Good Friday, when, in accordance with custom, this friar preached before her on the Holy Passion. The ladies and the maids, including my aunt, being seated as was their wont before the reverend father, in full view of him, he, as though giving out the text and introit of his sermon, began to say: 'It is for you, lovely humanity, it is for you that I suffer this day. Thus on a certain occasion spake our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then proceeding with his sermon the friar chronicled all the sufferings and afflictions which Jesus endured for mankind at His death upon the Cross, and these he compared to the sufferings that he himself endured on account of my aunt; but in such covert, such disguised words that even the most enlightened might have failed to understand their meaning. Queen Anne, however, who was very expert both in mind and judgment, laid hold of this, and took counsel as to the real meaning of the sermon, both with certain lords and ladies and certain learned men who were there present. They all pronounced the sermon to be most scandalous, and the Grey Friar most deserving of punishment; for which reason he was secretly chastised and whipped, and then driven away, without any scandal being made. Such was the Queen's reply to the amours of this Grey Friar; and thus was my aunt well avenged on him for the way in which he had so often importuned her. In those times it was not allowable, under divers penalties, either to contradict or to refuse to speak to such people, who, so it was thought, conversed only of God and the salvation of the soul."

In Mérimée's *Chronique de Charles IX.*, there will be found a facetious sermon by another Grey Friar; this, however, is less in keeping with the *Heptameron*, than with the character of the discourses delivered by the preachers of the League.—M.

C.

(TALE XII., Page 101.)

THE following account of the assassination of Alexander de' Medici is taken from Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1826, vol. xvi. p. 95 *et seq.* :—

"But few months had elapsed since Alexander's marriage, and he had employed them in his wonted debauchery, carrying depravity and dishonour alternately into the convents and noblest abodes of Florence, when, on January 6, 1537, he was assassinated by the man whom, of all men, he the least mistrusted. This was his cousin, Lorenzino de' Medici. . . . Lorenzino had already helped Alexander to seduce several women of noble birth; and to facilitate his assignations had often lent him his house, which adjoined the ducal residence in the Via Larga. He engaged to bring the Duke the wife of Leonardo Ginori—sister to his own mother, but much younger than she was. Alexander had long been struck with this lady's beauty, but so far she had virtuously repulsed him. After supper, however, on the day of the feast of the Epiphany, when the Carnival begins, Lorenzino informed the Duke that if he would repair to his house, unaccompanied and observing the greatest secrecy, he would find Catherine Ginori there. Alexander accepted the assignation, dismissed all his guards, rid himself of all those who wished to keep a watch upon him, and entered Lorenzino's house without being perceived. He was tired and wished to rest awhile, but before throwing himself on the bed he unbuckled his sword, and Lorenzino, on taking it from him to hang it at the head of the bedstead, wound the belt around the hilt in such a fashion that the weapon could not be easily drawn from its scabbard. After telling the Duke to rest whilst he went to fetch his aunt, he went away, locking the door of the room behind him; but returned shortly after-

wards with a spadassin, nicknamed Scoronconcolo, whom he had previously engaged, for the purpose, he said, of ridding him of a great personage of the Court whose name he had prudently not given. In fact Lorenzino had carried his design to the very point of execution without taking a single person into his confidence. On returning into the room, followed by Scoronconcolo, he called to the Duke: 'Are you asleep, my lord?' and at the same moment transpierced him with a short sword which he was carrying. Alexander, although mortally wounded, tried to resist his murderer, whereupon Lorenzino, to prevent him from crying out, thrust two of his fingers into his mouth, at the same time exclaiming: 'Be not afraid, my lord.' Alexander, it appears, bit his assailant's fingers with all the strength of his jaws, and holding him in a tight embrace, rolled with him about the bed, so that Scoronconcolo was unable to strike the one without striking the other. He endeavoured to get at the Duke from between Lorenzino's legs, but only succeeded in piercing the mattress, till at last he remembered that he had a knife about him, and drove it into the Duke's throat, turning it round and round until he eventually killed him.[1]

"Lorenzino failed to reap the fruits of the crime, which he had planned with so much skill and such profound secrecy. By the life he had led, he had aroused the distrust of all honest folks, he had no friends to whom he could apply for advice or help, he had no party behind him, he had never been known to display that zeal for liberty which he subsequently affected. Although he was the first of the Medici in the order of succession, no one thought of him. For his own part, he only thought of ensuring his safety. He locked the door of the room, taking the key away with him, and having obtained an order for the city gates to be opened, and for post-horses to be provided for him, under pretence that he had just learned that his brother was ill, in the country, he started for Bologna, whence he proceeded to Venice, accompanied by Scoronconcolo."

[1] Bened. Varchi, lib. xv.; Bern. Segni, l. vii.; Filippo de Nerli, l. xii.; Gio. Batt. Adriani, l. i.; Scipione Ammirato, l. xxxi.; Pauli Jovii. Hist. l. xxxviii.; Istorie di Marco Guazzo, fol. 159.

D.

(TALE XVI., Page 183.)

WITH reference to this story Brantôme writes as follows in the Sixth Discourse of his *Vies des Dames Galantes*:—

"In the hundred stories of Queen Margaret of Navarre we have a very fine tale of that lady of Milan who, having one night given an assignation to the late M. de Bonnivet, afterwards Admiral of France, posted her maids with drawn swords on the stairs so that they might make a noise there; which they did right well, in obedience to the orders of their mistress, who for her part feigned great affright, saying that her brothers-in-law must have remarked something amiss, that she herself was lost, and that he, Bonnivet, ought to hide under the bed or behind the hangings. But M. de Bonnivet, without evincing any fear, wrapped his cape round his arm, and taking his sword replied: 'Well, where are these brave brothers who want to frighten me, or do me harm? When they see me they will not even dare to look at the point of my sword.' Then opening the door he rushed out, and just as he was about to charge down the staircase he espied the women making all this noise; and they, taking fright at sight of him, began to cry out and confess everything. M. de Bonnivet, seeing that it was nothing more serious, left them, bidding them betake themselves to the devil; and then, returning into the room, he closed the door after him and went to find his lady, who began to laugh and embrace him, and confess to him that it was a trick devised by herself, assuring him that if he had behaved as a poltroon, and had not thus displayed the valour which he was said to possess, he should never have had her favours. . . . She was one of the most beautiful women of Milan, and he had had a deal of trouble to win her.

"I knew a brave gentleman who, one day at Rome, was alone with a pretty Roman lady—her husband being away—and she gave him a similar alarm, causing one of her women to come in hastily to warn her that her husband had returned from the

country. The lady, feigning astonishment, begged the gentleman to hide himself in a closet, as otherwise she would be lost. 'No, no,' said the gentleman; 'I would not do that for all the wealth in the world; if he comes I will kill him.' And as he seized upon his sword the lady began to laugh and confess that she had contrived this to try him so as to see how he would act, and if he would defend her well should her husband seek to do her any harm.

"I also knew a very beautiful lady who suddenly left a lover she had, because she did not find him brave, and took another who did not resemble him, but who was extremely feared and redoubted on account of his sword, he being one of the best swordsmen that could then be found."—Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, vol. ix. pp. 388–90.

E.

(TALE XVII., Page 195.)

BRANTÔME, in the Thirtieth Discourse of his *Capitaines Étrangers*, writes of Furstemberg as follows:—

"Count William von Furstemberg was accounted a good and valiant captain, and would have been more highly esteemed had he not been deficient in faith, over greedy and too much addicted to pillage, as he showed once in France, when he passed along with his troops; for after his passage there was nothing left. He served King Francis for the space of six or seven years [not more than six.—ED.] with some five companies always numbering from six to seven thousand men; however, after this long term of services, or rather ravages and pillage, he was suspected of having designs against the King's person, as I have elsewhere related, and those who would learn more of the matter will find the story in the hundred tales of Queen Margaret of Navarre, wherein the valour, generosity and magnanimity of that great King are clearly shown. The other, in great fear, left his service and entered that of the Emperor (Charles V.). If he had not been related to Madame la Régente (Louise of Savoy), through

the House of Saxony, whence sprang that of Savoy, he would possibly have met with the fate he merited, had the King been minded to it; but on this occasion the King wished to show his magnanimity rather than have him put to death by the officers of justice. Again the King pardoned him when, on the arrival of the Emperor at St. Dizier in Champagne, he was taken, sounding the river Marne,[2] which he had on other occasions well reconnoitred, in coming to or on leaving France with his troops. He was on this occasion merely sent to the Bastille, and got quit for a ransom of 30,000 crowns. Some great captains said and opined that he ought not to have been thus treated as a prisoner of war but as a real vile spy, for he had professedly acted as such; and they said, moreover, that he got off too cheaply at such a ransom, which did not represent the smallest of the larcenies that he had perpetrated in France."—Lalanne's *Œuvres de Brantôme*, vol. i. pp. 349–50.

Prior to this affair Furstemberg apparently showed some regret for his earlier schemes against Francis I., for Queen Margaret, writing to her brother in 1536, remarked :—

"Count William has asked me to write and tell you that there is a great difference between the shameful purgatory of Italy and the glorious paradise of this camp,[3] and he spoke to me of his past misdeeds, which I would rather he should speak of to you," &c.—Génin's *Lettres de Marguerite*, p. 321.

In a poetic epistle sent by Margaret to Francis I. in January 1543, to celebrate the New Year, there is an allusion to a "Conte Guillaume," whom Messrs. de Lincy

[2] This occurred in September 1544. From an unpublished MS. in the public library at Rheims it appears that Furstemberg was wearing a disguise when captured. The Emperor had sent him forward expressly to sound the river. Another unpublished MS. at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (*anc. fol.* 8561. *f.* 22), gives some particulars of his operations about this time.—Ed.

[3] That of Avignon. See vol. i. p. liv.—Ed.

and Montaiglon conjecture to be Furstemberg, though other commentators think that the Queen refers to William Poyet, the dishonest chancellor, who was sent to the Bastille in 1542 for peculation. We share, however, the opinion of Messrs. de Lincy and Montaiglon, as in various contemporary MSS. which we have referred to, we have frequently found Furstemberg alluded to as "Conte" and "Comte Guillaume," without any mention of his surname. The passage in Margaret's epistle alluded to above may be thus rendered in prose :—

"God, fighting for the King in every spot, curses his enemies and brings them to shame and ruin, so that none hold them of account; as witness 'Compte ["Conte" in the MS.] Guillaume,' who, in serving the King and the kingdom, became rich, feared and highly esteemed. Now, however, a fugitive, poor and contemned, he may well meditate as to whence came his honours, who it was that maintained him wealthy, happy and feared; and thus it is that all the King's enemies are cursed by God in Paradise."—*Les Marguerites de la Marguerite*, 1873, vol. ii. p. 203.

Apropos of Furstemberg the following entry occurs in M. de Laborde's *Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi* (vol. ii. p. 229) :—

"Paid to Francis de Cadenet, doctor to Count William of Furstemberg, as a gift and favour for his services, 30 crowns, value 67 livres 10 sols."—L., M. and ED.

END OF VOL. II.

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